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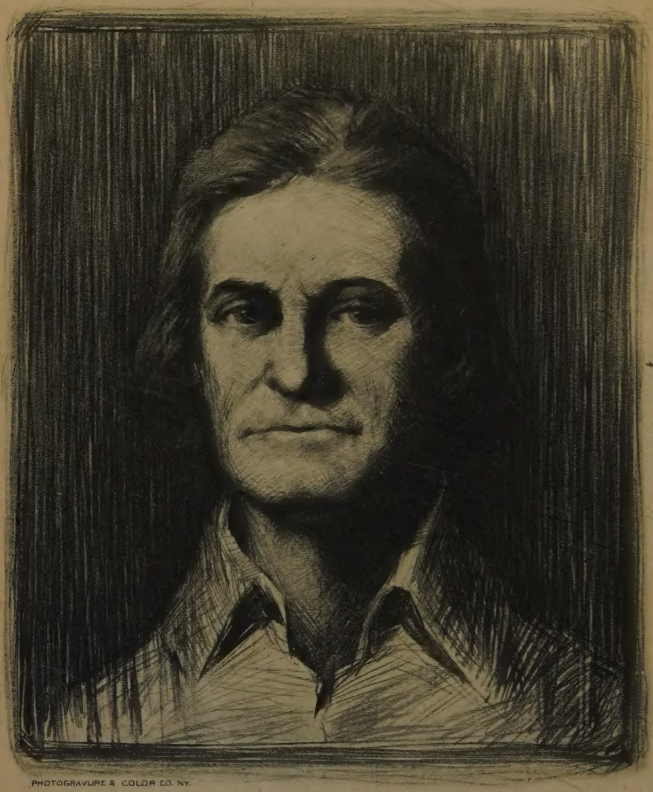

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John Brown

AGED FORTY TWO.

TIME AND CHANCE

A ROMANCE AND A HISTORY: BEING THE STORY OF THE LIFE OF A MAN

By *ELBERT HUBBARD*

VOLUME TWO

DONE INTO A BOOK BY THE ROYCROFTERS AT THE ROYCROFT SHOP, WHICH IS IN EAST AURORA, N. Y., U. S. A.
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ELBERT HUBBARD

Come ! Come ! Arouse thyself, arouse thyself ! Undertake with faith the heaviest labors, endure with courage the hardest disappointments. Have no fear, man ! The decline of thy years already begun, the course of thy life nearly completed, withdraw thee from the things that perish ; let thy soul, filled with scorn for them, hunger for higher things and continually aspire towards the Celestial Kingdom !

BOOK THREE

TIME AND CHANCE

CHAPTER I

UNTIL yesterday, when a dissecting school of tale-tellers arose, it was the fashion to close the story at the church door. Beyond this the romancer dare not pass. And this is well. In tragedy we take our leave of the hero when he is given over to the undertaker; and in romance all is over when the priest arrives.

Is this always so? Heaven be praised, no. But it is true so very, very often that mortals knowing in their hearts the facts refuse to look upon a picture of average conjugal life. All is so tinged with grey; it is so dull, so heavy, so sodden, so spiritless, so hopeless, so reduced to animality, that we leave it to the naturalist, the statistician and the economist.

But youthful love is always charming. The love of

milkmaids and rustics is as pleasing to us as the love of princes. For in this brief space preceding marriage the heart sings with joy and the presence of the living God burns in every wayside bush.

John Brown was married. He built a little house, on a corner of his father's land. His wife was a good housekeeper—active, industrious, honest. She cooked, scrubbed, sewed and on Sunday they went to church. They talked together—did John Brown and his wife—talked of the weather and the crops and the price of wool: of the neighbors and this one's bonnet and that one's horse. They read the Bible—a chapter a day—beginning at Exodus and going straight through, skipping not a pedigree, omitting nothing.

The dreams and hopes and aspirations of youth were buried deep down in John Brown's heart; and these were things that his wife had never known. She had been brought up to look upon marriage as the end of life for woman, and so it was.

New views of truth no longer opened out to him; high and holy impulses no longer warmed his blood like wine; the sunsets now never brought tears to his eyes from well-springs of undefined emotion—never.

He worked in the tannery from morning until night, six days in the week; and on Sundays he wore stiff, uncomfortable clothes and listened to sermons that he accepted without comment. He was religious. The Jehovah of the Jews to him was God, and the torn and bleeding thorn-crowned Christ meant little—only a cog in a "scheme" of salvation.

He had "settled down"—or was making a heroic inward struggle to do so. Patient, persistent labor always brings its reward. John Brown was making money: the little house was paid for: he had several hundred dollars to loan: he now owned an interest in his father's tannery. And then the neighbors respected him, for they had elected him District Surveyor.

Ten years had passed since his marriage. There was a dog-eared *Plutarch* hidden away in the bottom of an oaken chest. Possibly once a year—at nighttime—when there was sickness and he sat up with the stricken ones, he had taken out the book, turned the pages aimlessly, sighed and put the volume back.

John Brown was thirty years of age. His face was seamed, his stiff, straight hair slightly tinged with grey. The roundness had gone from his wife's face, and the bearing and nursing of six children had taken the lines of beauty from her form. She worked hard, and tended her little flock well, and if she scolded a bit at times, who is there so perfect that he dare blame? Her eyes were hollow, her cheeks yellow, her hands red, calloused and coarse.

So the days passed and in the thirteenth year of her marriage she died. The neighbor women robed her in her wedding dress. It had been packed away in lavender all these years in the oaken chest with the dog-eared *Plutarch*. Pillowed on her arm they placed her baby boy—tired with three days of life. And so they slept.

Five children were left—one had died when four

years old—five healthy, hearty, romping children. Their father was postmaster, farmer, tanner, surveyor, and rich for those days. He could not care for those children any more than he could personally look after his herds. And so he cast about for a wife.

What sort of a wife did he desire? why, bless your soul, he wanted just such a wife as he had lost! a capable, honest, earnest, Christian woman who could care for the household and keep things in order when he was at home and look after matters when he was away. He was a man of affairs and things must be attended to. A widower with means can take his pick of marriageable women, just as a man with money buys the horse he fancies.

Fathers, mothers and kinsmen all plead his cause and press his suit. What chance has naked little Cupid, shivering in the chill, against such advocates as these!

John Brown cast about for a woman who looked just as Dianthe Lusk did before she had borne seven children.

He found one—Mary Anne Day. He proposed to her father, then her mother, and then the subject was broached to Mary herself.

She was willing—nay more—she was pleased.

And right here, let us nail to the barn door of obliquity the pelt of that flaunting falsehood that women sell themselves for a home. According to our peculiar social code a woman marries (or refuses) the man who seeks her hand. She waits for the man to come

to her. Nine times out of ten she accepts the first that comes—and the fact that he is willing to make her his wife is proof of his love, and further is sufficient reason why she should love him, and she does. We are not lilies of the field, and there are no ravens that can be relied upon to bring us food. A woman must be clothed and fed, and what more natural than that she should love the man who promises as much?

Widower Brown hitched up the mules to a spring wagon and drove over to Farmer Day's, and a preacher was there who married John and Mary. And then the couple drove back to John's house and Mary was mother to the motherless children: the faithful, loyal, patient wife of John Brown.

In this chapter we have treated thirteen years as men measure time. Only one chapter to a heaping dozen years? Yes, that is all. The historical romance has for its theme the evolution of a soul. Material things are only touched upon as they influence for good or ill.

In crossing the United States there are great stretches of arid space where the sun beats down hot and stifling: where only cacti, sage brush and the dried up beds of streams are seen, and where, over all is the shining alkali dust—aye, and the whitening bones of animals and men. So there are stretches in the life of mortals where the soul travels through arid districts of uneventful time, victim of "arrested development."

All savages are prey to this law: an Indian at forty

knows no more than an Indian at thirty: there is no advancement: the soul stands still. The average man of fifty is no better, no wiser, than he was at forty. John Brown at thirty-two was no nearer to God than he was at twenty—and possibly he had drifted—who knows?

Three years went by and Mary Anne Day added three sons to the house of Brown.

Brown ruled his family like one of the patriarchs of old. They obeyed without question. He was stern, dignified, sober and withal prosperous and religious. Had he continued to focus his efforts on business, he might have become very rich and left a fortune to found a theological seminary.

But a letter came to him one day. He received many letters now; but he picked this one out from a half dozen others and it gave him a thrill—a start. And there flashed over his memory the thought of the first letter that he had ever received. He was ashamed to think that he—John Brown—a man happily married to his second wife, the father of eight fine children—practical, virtuous, sensible, should tremble at the sight of his name written in a certain chirography—pshaw!

He put the letter in a left hand vest pocket and read the others.

That afternoon he rode to his farm four miles out of town. Passing through a grove he reined in, dismounted, sat down on a stump, looked carefully about and took the letter out of his pocket.

He broke the wafers and read:

COVINGTON, KY., June 2, 1835.

JOHN BROWN:

Sir—You have not forgotten me, although you may be surprised to receive this letter. My husband died eight years ago and left me an ample competence. I have one child, a son seventeen years old. He is now in college, but is in full sympathy with my work. I am using my time and money, endeavoring to ameliorate the condition of the slaves and the slave owners. For the slave owner is the greatest sufferer from this thing which John Wesley called "the sum of all human villainies."

Doubtless you will think I am a fanatic and have been moved to act in this matter from a spirit of revenge, and I cannot wholly absolve myself from such a charge.

Slavery teaches the slave owner and his family that labor is degrading and thus it breeds a pride that is akin to vice. My brothers are gamblers and outcasts, and my father is in a suicide's grave, all through the false idea that men should be owned by other men. And had my brothers been different men, your fate and mine might have been different, but that is all behind. Then that men should traffic in their own children is one of the concomitants of the condition. These things have come close home to me and if you think I feel o'er deeply, pardon me my intemperance and hear me when I say that my years on earth are few and I would leave the earth better than I found it.

When you assisted Jim Slivers to escape, you gave me a hint that has never left me. Of course the running away of slaves will not in itself break up the institution, but it will cause a fermentation that must

make men take sides, and some day this will break into revolution and the end of slavery will come in a day. In the meantime we are preparing the way.

In a week or less there will arrive at your house by night four blacks, guided by a white man, James Golden by name. This man you knew in your boyhood. For reasons that I need not detail he is dear to me. He is guiding these black men to Conneaut, O., where a small schooner is in waiting to carry them to Canada. You must secrete them and feed them and not start them forward on their perilous journey until they are rested.

Remember I do not encourage slaves to run away except they are to be separated man from wife, or mother from child. In which case I do what I can.

I have heard of your prosperity and am glad to know that you are happily married.

In this letter I have confided in you entirely, and although I do not know your present attitude on the Negro question, I yet ask you to do that which I have asked in remembrance of what has gone before.

Respectfully Yours,

MARGARET BRYDGES.

II

TANNERY, farm, sheep, cattle—all fell into abeyance. This sober, stern-faced man, whom no one had ever accused of possessing a particle of sentiment, suddenly forgot the practical things of earth and was all aflame to do the bidding of a woman—a woman whom he had not seen for years.

Misty rumors had come to him from time to time of the "under-ground railway," but he had never believed that there was such a thing in existence. Long years before, in the days of his callow youth, he had accidentally been mixed up in getting a slave away, but the scheme had failed. And it was just as well, for it was only a boyish freak at best.

Of course Brown had no sympathy with the "peculiar institution"; he believed that it must eventually be done away with; and in a scrap book that he had begun fifteen years before, and which had not since received a new clipping, was this quotation from Jefferson:

"The whole commerce between master and man is an exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one hand, and the most degrading submissions on the other. Our children see these things and imitate them. The man must be a prodigy who can contain his morals and manners undepraved under such circumstances. And with what execration should that statesman be loaded who, permitting one half the citizens to trample on the rights of the others, transforms these into despots and those into enemies; destroys the morals of the one and the liberty of the other! And can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed their only firm basis—a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God, and that they cannot be violated without His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country, when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever; that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortunes is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference. The Almighty has no attribute that can take sides with us in such a contest."

Owen Brown had taught his children by words dropped here and there that slavery was wrong; and as children are heir to the religious and political opinions of their parents, they all believed that some day the bondsmen would be made free. They believed this just as they believed in the "Resurrection of the

body," the coming of "Judgment Day" and the approach of the "Millenium." As to bringing about the Millenium, that was none of their affairs—they had other work to do.

John Brown sat there on the stump and read that letter the second time. A wild tumult of emotion swept through his heart. She was alive! She was alive! Not a word had he heard from Margaret for eighteen years. He had mourned her as dead, for how was it possible that such a frail, delicate creature could exist under the conditions that surrounded her when last they met!

She was alive—she had a son—she was living for a purpose!

His own life stretched out into a flat, desert waste. Where now were all his proud possessions? He, too, had a son, yes, several of them and daughters as well. He loved them of course—it was a father's duty to love his children. Two of them had died and over their graves grew a tangle of blackberry bushes and trailing vines.

Margaret's years had doubled since he had seen her. Was her hair still wavy and golden? Had age touched her lightly and had she in these eighteen fleeting years often thought of him? Or had he dropped out of her life entirely, until now some one had mentioned his name? And her son—did he look like her?

The horse began to paw; the man mounted and instead of going on to his farm rode back to town.

He went straight home and showed the letter to his wife.

She read the missive with an air of impatience; and then went on industriously rolling pie crust.

"Well?" said Mrs. Brown.

"Where shall we stow them—that 's the question!"

"No!"

"Oh, but we must."

"And who is this Margaret Bulge that writes so as a matter of course and never even says 'by your leave'?"

"Margaret Brydges? why, don't you know—she was Margaret Silverton—I have told you of those rich people in Zanesville that I got acquainted with when I was a boy!"

"Oh, seems to me I heard you tell the children some story about going to Zanesville with cattle!"

"Why, yes, now you have it—but these runaways—we may have to keep them several days. The neighbors must not know and the children must not know"—

"But both will know and you will be arrested and sent off to prison!"

"No, Mary, these Negroes are human beings and if sore oppressed we must give our mite and help them to a place of freedom."

"Well, if you are bound to risk your neck, I s'pose the cave is the best place!"

Mrs. Brown always at first opposed her husband's plans—not seriously, perhaps, but just through habit.

Yet she ever finally fell in with them. Such a will as his could not be successfully opposed, and on all points, his opinions soon became hers. It is much easier to accept the views of a strong mind than to controvert them: we move in the line of least resistance.

The "cave" was simply an outside cellar: a contrivance very common in those days and plentiful yet in the Far West, where they are known as "dug-outs." By digging down two or three feet and then building a low log house, with a pitched roof, made also of logs, and the whole banked up and covered with earth, the cave was complete. It was frost proof in winter, heat proof in summer, and wind proof the whole year round.

This cave was twenty feet long and ten wide; and the thrifty John Brown usually had packed away there enough provisions to keep his family a year.

"The cave! that's so, it's the only place where the children do not play and the neighbors don't go. It takes a woman to think of things!"

Mary was pleased, and now in full accord with her husband's wishes. She looked carefully around—all of the children were off at the creek, save the three little ones who were too small to tell.

Husband and wife went to the cave to make arrangements for visitors. Boxes and barrels were piled up snugly, and clean, dry straw was brought from the barn. Over this were thrown blankets; extra quilts were brought from the house and several beds were robbed of pillows in order that the weary runaways

might rest. A new hasp was put on the cave door, locked with a padlock, and Mr. Brown held up the key. Mrs. Brown smiled, as much as to say, " now we have 'em."

John Brown slept with one eye open that night, but the Scotch collie did not bark once the whole night through. Neither did he the next night, nor the next, and a full week passed with no change in the monotonous round of existence.

Mrs. Brown was feeling quite sure the whole matter was a hoax, and Mr. Brown feared that the fugitives had been recaptured.

It was near two weeks before one night a clatter of sand tossed against the side of the house awoke John Brown. He jumped out of bed and hurrying on his clothes, went to the door.

" Do you want to race horses? " came a voice out of the darkness. Eighteen years had passed since the vibration of sound waves from that throat had fallen on his tynpanum. It was the same Jim Slivers.

" Yes, Jim, I 'll race you, wait till I get a lantern."

" No, no, we don't need a light."

The men shook hands as though they had parted but the week before.

" And your—your runaways? " asked Brown.

" They are here, where will you keep them—in the clock? "

" No, in the cave yonder."

" Just the place, I knew you had sense ! "

The two men walked down the road a hundred

yards, and in the shadows of the bushes were six crouching figures. At a sign from Jim they came trooping out into the road and followed their leader straight to the cave. The mellow moonlight revealed the long straw bed. A blanket was given to each of the six dark figures and without a word they lay down to rest.

"Is there grub here to last until to-morrow night?" asked Jim.

"Yes, a boiled ham, cold potatoes and five loaves of bread."

Brown brought a two-gallon can of milk from the spring house, and then the cave door was shut and locked and the key given to Jim.

The first faint pink streaks were coloring the east, and the loud twitter of birds in the bushes told of coming day.

"I 've been to Hudson before, you know—will any o' my friends recognize me?" asked Jim.

"After all these years? no. We are men now, when you was here last, you were but a boy."

The men sat down on a log at the woodpile.

"And Margaret—tell me of Margaret—is she well?"

"Oh, you mean the Missus?"

"Yes, when did you see her last?"

"A month ago—she lives in Cincinnati."

"And how did you ever get back to her?"

"Well, I 'll tell you—it was like this"—

And Jim told.

III

ALL of our acts merge so one into the other, that in our own minds, life, with its tragic tumults comes all as a matter of course. Lightning never strikes out of a clear sky, but the storm clouds gradually gather; so to every crisis there is a gradual approach. Jim's experience, to him, did not seem extraordinary.

When he was seized by the two legal kidnappers at Plainfield he soon saw the uselessness of struggle. One of the men was George Silverton, the other was a professional detective. Jim was handcuffed to the officer, and George looked after them both, treating one just as well as the other. They went by boat from New Haven to New York, and then took passage on a schooner direct for Savannah. There was much eating, drinking and making merry on the way, in all of which Jim had his share.

He was a valuable piece of property and the men were not at all inclined to maltreat him. A live, good-natured nigger was worth six hundred dollars; a sick,

dispirited nigger might be worth half as much, and a dead nigger was not worth anything.

From scraps of conversation and the bilge of boozy talk eked out during ten days' time, Jim surmised that some one had sent money to Margaret to purchase his freedom. And moreover, he discovered that a bargain had been entered into between George and James Silverton: James taking the money and George the slave—provided he could catch him, and catch him he surely did: of this Jim was sure.

At Savannah, Jim was sold at auction, and sent to Mississippi. He did not deem this any special hardship—dozens of other slaves were sold too, what about it!

He had to work hard, but after a year, being intelligent and willing, he was given charge of a cotton-gin, and then in another year he was given charge of a mulatto girl and they were married after the manner of the times. They had their own little house and were living happily—he attending to the cotton-gin and she acting as laundress.

About this time a certain New Orleans cotton buyer appeared upon the scene and took a great fancy to Mrs. Jim Slivers. In fact he bought her, and as salve for his broken heart, Jim was given his pick of five black wenches.

But Jim had a streak of white man's sentiment in his heart, a very inconvenient thing to possess, and he pined for his lost mulatto girl, and was even so unreasonable as to refuse to look upon the dusky

wenches. His master took his melancholy for a case of grumps and duly gave him twenty lashes on the bare back. He was ordered to take to his bosom one of the brunette belles and be happy, and if he still refused there was the rice swamp and the cotton fields for him and all other rebellious ingrates.

A month before this alternative was offered, Jim had dispatched a letter to Margaret Silverton at Zanesville, telling her of his condition. Now it was a very serious offense for a slave to send a letter that had not on it the master's seal, and slaves could not receive letters, either.

Jim did not expect an answer and in fact he had no well-defined reasons for writing to Margaret at all, save perhaps to show her that he had not forgotten how to write, for she it was who taught him this accomplishment—much against her father's will.

But one day Jim was hastily hustled out of the ginnery by his master and ordered to run to the creek, take a swim, dress himself in a new suit of white duck and hurry up to the City Tavern.

He occasionally was loaned out, or hired out, to act as waiter when there were banquets at the hotel, so he promptly obeyed as a matter of course.

But on getting to the hotel, great was his astonishment on being met by a tall, slender, handsome, lovely, angelic lady in pale blue who wished to purchase a body servant.

"Ah, and I know who the lady was," sighed John Brown.

"And who was it?" said James Golden, who was telling the story with much needless circumlocution, that out of regard for the dear reader we have omitted.

"Why, Margaret Silverton!"

"That 's where you 're wrong, John, 't was n't Miss Margaret, no such thing—you could n't guess in a month of Sundays!"

"Well, who was it?" asked John in a disappointed tone.

"Why, it was Missus Brydges—Madam Brydges she called herself—wife of old Cap Brydges!"

"Indeed!"

"Yes, her name used to be Margaret Silverton, but 't was n't then!" and Jim laughed a loud peal of merriment at his joke.

John Brown did not laugh; he groaned.

"Now what you think that tall, graceful, angelic, lovely, sorrowful lady she do?"

"I don't know, what did she do?"

"Just look me over as if she never saw me; feel o' my arms; jab me with her fan; look at my teeth; test my eyesight an' then run me up three flights of stairs with a big carpet bag balanced on my head to see if my wind was good. 'Look pleasant, you dam rascal,' said my master, an' he up and gives me a kick behind when no one was lookin'. I was that near bustin' with laugh that I 'spect I was looking solemn, for all the while I knew the Missus was just makin' b'lieve and that she was goin' to buy me

whether or no. 'What 's your price,' says she.

"' Fifteen hundred,' says he.

"' I 'll give you a thousand,' says she.

"' I 'll split the difference,' says he.

"' Very well, I 'll take him,' says she.

"So when she had paid over the money, she ordered me to go to her room to strap her trunks. When I got there she just locked the door, and up and bust out cryin' and took on awful, but after a while she sobered down an' says, ' where is John Brown?' How did I know where John Brown was? But she made me tell all 'bout you—go back to the very day I run away from Zanesville—when you met me at the Gulch—and then I had to follow clear through to Plainfield. If I skipped anything, that woman she made me go back an' tell 'bout it. And then I had to tell all 'bout Ole Doctor Melden and what you done when you got her letters, an' who read 'em, an' what you said, an' what Ole Doctor Melden he said, an' what you both said. Then I told her how George and the other fellow stole me.

"' An' who sent me that money to pay for you,' she asked.

"' John Brown,' says I.

"' And did he earn it all,' says she.

"' Yes,' says I. You see I did n't know, but only guessed.

"' Well,' says she, ' I 've bought you now an' am goin' to make you free just because John Brown wanted it so.' "

"And was she very miserable?"

"What for should she be?"

"With that man who was not her mate!"

"They say she was mis'ble at first, but she soon learned how to manage him, an' then he was mis'ble."

John did not know that in that most unhappy of all unhappy things, an unhappy marriage, the grewsomeness of the condition slinks away when bravely fronted; just as close acquaintanceship with crime removes its repulsiveness. Abstract complications and unseen terrors are the only things that really agitate. We can cope with the known.

Then Jim went on to tell how Old Captain Brydges was very proud of his young wife, how he treated her pretty well, and how she did just about as she pleased.

From Natchez they took Jim to New Orleans and there he found his wife, Jennie. Mrs. Brydges bought her and then the two slaves and Captain Brydges and his wife started back for Kentucky.

Once back at Covington Jim got an inkling that there was strife on hand as to the advisability of making him and his wife free, Mrs Brydges insisting on manumission papers being made out immediately, but Captain Brydges had his way this time, and it was provided that on his death the slaves were to have their freedom.

There was not long to wait—in a year Captain Brydges' death set them free. Margaret moved from Covington, across the river to Cincinnati. Jim and his wife still lived with Mrs. Brydges as servants.

Runaway slaves came to her house from time to time, from unknown places, brought by unknown men. The house was a large, old-fashioned mansion on the river bank, and often the fugitives were landed from row boats. Sometimes they were brought in trunks, or boxes or barrels, and after being kept for a day or a month as the case might be, they were aided to go on north.

Jim was not sure about the number that Margaret assisted to escape in this way—he thought it might amount to twenty-five or more a year. He himself had made two trips between Toledo and Cincinnati within six months with fugitives, traveling by night. If the moon was bright they kept to the fields, but if it was dark they went by the road. There were friends along the way where they stopped and if no "stations" were near they simply slept out of doors and depended for food on berries and what they could pick up.

Constables and all officers were alert to capture fugitives, for it meant big rewards, so the "conductor" must know the country thoroughly, otherwise his party would fall into a trap.

The free-and-easy, matter-of-fact way that Jim discussed the question surprised Brown. Jim seemed to have no conscience in the matter at all—sentiment did not enter. The danger and excitement was much more satisfactory to him than steady work, and he chuckled to think of the discomfiture of the rich owners at the loss of their property. His pleasure was of the same sort that is shown by the mob when a

rich man's house burns. We like to see the successful man undone. Yet back of this John could see a steady, determined effort on the part of Margaret Brydges: she was working with a purpose.

"How long has Mrs. Brydges been helping slaves to run away?"

"Oh, since the Cap got short of breath!"

"For ten years?"

"Yes, she was through this very town herself eight years ago!"

"Not through Hudson?"

"Yes, that's a fack, through Hudson," chuckled Jim. "I was with her. We had a peddler's cart, she wore a ragged dress an' browned up like a gypsy. Our cart had a covered box with a lock on the side, a false bottom an' a trap door below, where our two runaways rode. We saw you, an' the Missus she tried to sell you a tin pail, an' she was going to tell you who she was, but you was so busy an' you had so many babies to look after, an' your wife was sick, that we just drove right along!"

John was astonished at this revelation. He could not help thinking that the woman was insane.

"And does Mrs. Brydges go on such trips now?"

"Oh, no, she just stays to home and supplies the money, and teaches the black young'uns to read and write."

"And does she use all of her time and money in that way?"

"Of course—she has ever so many thousand dol-

lars every year from the steamboats she owns, and all of her money goes for niggers," said Jim as he refilled his pipe. "You see," he continued, "she calls it a holy warfare, an' she thinks that if slaves now and then give their masters the slip it will teach the owners to treat them well. For if a slave is used right he never thinks of freedom. But when you begin to use the blacksnake, an' takes away his wife or sells his children, then he gets full o' hell, and wants to run away. Well, the Missus has friends around here and there, and if they see a case like this an' they can do it easy they helps the nigger to scoot. An' the Missus she thinks that some day, oh in a hundred years, all the slaves will get educated to a pint where they will all just get up an' declare themselves free, an' then the white folks who don't like slavery will stand by 'em an' that will be all there 'll be about it—see?"

John Brown did not see, but the thought of this earnest woman working straight along on one idea impressed him most strangely; and that she should now select him to help her in this work gratified him.

"You see," said Jim, examining the stem of his pipe intently, "the Missus and me had the same father—no use denyin' it, an' I am bound to help her."

"And God is the Father of us all, and so I 'm bound to help her," exclaimed Brown with a sudden determination.

"I say now—hain't you two men comin' to breckfuss, sometime!" called a sharp feminine voice from

the back stoop. "Here I 've called you three times!"

While the men had sat there on the log the shadows of the night had flown away, the sun had come up from behind the hills and Mrs. Brown with the help of the children had prepared breakfast.

Still the master of the house sat there listening to the stranger's tale. The two men now arose and went forward to the house. They washed in a basin on the stoop at the back door where a gourd of soft soap stood: then wiped their hands on the roller towel and took seats at the table.

Strangers often dined at Brown's, so the new-comer attracted little attention from the younger generation. Mr. Brown asked the blessing.

A glimpse of a woman's form was seen coming around the corner of the house.

"It 's the Widow Judson," said Mrs. Brown to her husband. "I told her she could have some gooseberries if she would pick 'em herself. Oh, good morning, Liza Ann, won't you have some breckfuss?"

"No, thankee, I 've just et, I come for the gooseberries you"—

She did not finish the sentence. She caught sight of Jim Slivers as he sat there at the table.

Her face turned to stone.

She raised her hands above her head, gave a wild scream, and exclaiming, "My Jedediah! my Jedediah!" fell to the floor in a dead faint.

IV

YOU better not risk yourself too much," explained Jim Slivers. "We 'll light out 'bout 'leven o'clock—the sky is dark so we can keep to the road and make fully fifteen miles!"

"And if I take you in a wagon we can go through to-night—it 's only thirty miles!"

"But it won't do—some one may flash a lantern on us."

"Let 'em flash. My scheme is this—you see that wagon box there is full two feet deep—now we 'll just lay boards across the top, and put on that hay rack and load up with half a ton or more of good honest hay. With a keyhole saw we can make a trap door in the bottom of the wagon box and let the darkies crawl up in and lay down—with some hay to burrow in it will be comfortable enough. Then you and I can climb up on top and away we go."

"I guess you be a Yankee," drawled Jim through his nose.

"Well, at any rate, I can invent!"

"Is it patented?"

"Not yet."

"Brown's Patent Adjustable Darkey Carriage! I will be agent for 'em."

At nine o'clock when the children were all in bed Brown and his visitor repaired to the barn. It did not take long to scuttle the wagon box and get on the hay rack. Then the hay was loaded, the colored freight duly packed away, two strong horses hitched on and the drive was begun.

"And who is your confidential helper at Conneaut —you did not tell me."

"I tell nothin'," answered Jim as he lay on his back looking up at the stars.

"But you told me about Margaret."

"I would n't have, only she said I must."

"But where am I to go in Conneaut?"

"You mean where are you to deliver the goods?"

"Yes."

"I 'll show you when we get there—you see in this business we do no gossipin', an' the less one knows about other folks the better. You might be called on in court to answer questions an' it 's mighty convenient to know nothin' at such times."

"I see!"

"That 's why the Missus an' me did n't stop to visit with you years ago when we came through with our tinware. 'He 's happy,' said the Missus, 'he 's married an' happy—we 'll not break in on his peace—the

world can only be reformed by restless, mis'ble people?'"

"Did Margaret say that?"

"Yes."

"Well, it 's true, but why should she have sent you to me now?"

"I 'm blamed if I know. Only she says to me 'bout a year ago—'If John Brown was n't rich and prosperous he 'd be a great man—great as Cæsar or Demosthenes; but when a man is happy he is content, and if he 's content he lets well-enough alone. He 's like a fly stuck in 'lasses—for the first time in his life he 's got all the 'lasses he wants an' he just stays there till he dies.'"

"And that 's a rich man, is it?"

"For sure—a rich man is a blue-bottle stuck in treacle; treacle is good, but it gets away with a heap o' flies."

"Then for blue-bottles the love of treacle is the root of all evil?"

"I 'spect it is!"

"But you said the work of reforming the world is done by unhappy men. How about yourself?"

"Me? I 'm not reformin' the world—I 'm working for the Widow Brydges—twenty-five dollars a month an' expenses—I do just what I 'm told, that 's all."

"But you seem to be quite a philosopher—I 'd never have thought it of you."

"A man who travels nights, does a heap o' thinkin'."

"I guess that is so; shepherds were the first phi-

losophers, for they tended their flocks by night."

"Yes, the night sort o' shuts everything out—leaves you alone with God!"

"Why, Jim, you never used to talk like that."

"Did n't I? Well I 'm near forty years old, John Brown, an' so are you."

"That 's so," said Brown, shifting his position uneasily. He flicked the off horse with the whip, and the team responded, moving forward at a brisk trot.

At about one o'clock they drew into a wood at one side of the road. Brown crawled under the wagon, pushed up the trap door, and the "goods" climbed out to stretch their tired limbs. Mrs. Brown had put up a big basket of lunch, and as the fugitives ate they were inclined to be jolly, in view of their near approach of freedom.

Jim ordered silence. It was a curious thing to Brown to see a touch of arrogance in Jim's manner towards his subjects. But he remembered that the occupation makes the man, and the overseer is perforce a bully. Slavery breeds tyrants. John talked to these unfortunate colored people in a sympathetic way as they stood there in the shadows eating the bread and meat and hard-boiled eggs. They answered his questions in a manner that showed their gratification in being treated as equals. But Jim took the words out of their mouths and answered for them, explaining in a very cold-blooded, matter-of-fact style, that "these are women—this one is the wife of that man, and this of that one yonder, and t'other of him."

As he spoke he touched the respective persons with his cane, and then went on to explain that they were all dressed as men because they could travel better.

Further than this, only intelligent niggers were helped to run away: there were lazy niggers, and brutal niggers, and just plain, ornery niggers, and these could all go to the rice swamps and be blanked; but the Missus, she never lifted a finger 'cept where wife was to be taken from husband, or pickaninny from its mammy.

Jim had gotten so acclimated to the slave mart, that he still regarded Negroes as chattles and not as human beings, and John could not help but note how his manner tallied with that of the genuine slave-trader, for he talked before these people as if they were both sexless and senseless.

Again the load of hay moved on towards Lake Erie. In two hours the village of Conneaut was reached. Dogs barked, cats sputtered, cocks crew, but the silent streets gave no other sign of life.

In a certain cove of the harbor Jim expected to see the red and green lights of a little schooner, but the cove was devoid of a single spar.

Jim was disappointed. He turned and followed up the long village street, motioning that John should follow with the team. By the side of a big, box-like church that stood out square and cheerless in its coat of white paint, Jim stopped. He shoved back the sliding gate, followed on to the barn that stood behind the house, and opening the doors, John drove

his team with the load of hay inside. It was now nearly daylight.

Again the trap door was opened, out slid the six refugees, and at a sign from their master, shinned up the ladder into the haymow. He followed them, pulling the ladder up after, explaining to John that when the folks in the house were up and astir that he should go in and he would be properly entertained—that all was understood. But as for himself, being known in Conneaut, he had to lie low.

Brown unhitched his horses, put them in stalls and fed them.

Had John Brown been asked at this time of his life "what is God's best gift to man?" he would probably have replied "a horse." The love-lorn adorer of some fair maid is apt to reach a point where he finds balm in solitude; but the horse-lover knows neither surfeit nor the bitter pang of affection unrequited.

John caressed his sleek Morgans, and rubbed their sweaty coats with wisps of straw. Ere long he heard sounds of stirring life about the house.

Looking through a crack in the side of the barn he saw a tall, bearded man in a dressing gown at the wood-pile, splitting kindling to make the kitchen fire: the man's face looked strangely familiar. Soon a dumpy little woman came out on the back steps and began to peel potatoes from a pan that she held in her lap.

This well-to-do merchant and land-owner peeking out of the crack of a barn at this man and his wife was a funny proceeding! The man in the barn was

nor given to o'er mirth, but he laughed aloud, and then walked out into the daylight, still smiling.

The woman with the potatoes in her lap gave a little scream, and the tall man in the dressing gown stopped splitting wood and looked around:

"I swan, if it is n't John Brown, or else his ghost!"

"And I swan, if it is n't Walter Warren and his wife!"

The little woman wiped her hands on her apron and gave John Brown the heartiest kind of a handshake (but no kiss) and Walter Warren shook both his hands and pounded him on the back in fond delight.

There was a quick explanation in an undertone and remarks of "Oh! ho!" "I see!" "Yes, yes," and then the conversation turned to matters domestic. Walter and Rachel had six children, but John's score was far ahead.

The Rev. Warren had held pastorates at Cleveland and Toledo. One year before he had moved to Conneaut. John had heard of his successful preaching from time to time, and he probably heard too of his living at Conneaut, but a busy man like Brown could not keep track of every one in his head, and the fact that Rachel and Walter lived in "New Plymouth" had entirely slipped his mind.

There was much visiting and many questions to ask and answer.

The young Warrens were brought out one by one and sent through their paces for the visitor's benefit,

and John did not fail to inwardly note and outwardly acknowledge that they were a remarkably fine brood. The oldest boy was sixteen. He was then teaching his first term of school and expected some day to be a preacher. The second child was a girl nearly fifteen. Her name was Miriam, and Brown noticed that she was a fine lass and a full two inches taller than her mother.

John's eyes followed Rachel as she moved about at her work, and he saw that the matronly little woman was supremely happy and all bound up in the love of her husband and the care of her children. John noted too that husband and wife consulted on all manner of little domestic arrangements and took a quiet satisfaction in each other's companionship; and he could not but compare his life with theirs. His wife did her work and he did his. He could go or stay—she cared little. Her confidantes were among the neighbor women, and as for his own affairs, he kept them to himself. They did not quarrel, for John Brown was not a quibbling, quarrelsome man: he ordered certain things done and they were done. Still he was not unreasonable nor severe, but he did not wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at.

As the day wore on and old acquaintances had all been well discussed, conversation lagged a little. Brown had discovered that neither Mr. nor Mrs. Warren were vitally interested in his specialty. They did not believe in slavery, but they were first led to harbor fugitives out of pure philanthropy; the Negroes were

cold and a' hungered, and on Jim Slivers' request, they had taken them in and warmed and fed them. Jim had no great amount of cerebral gray matter, but he had the nose of a detective, and in some way had made the discovery that the Rev. Walter Warren was a son of Thomas Warren at Plainfield. And as he had worked in Thomas Warren's saw mill, he had a sort of claim on Thomas Warren's son, and he presented the matter in a way that caused the Rev. Warren and his wife to accede to his request and care for his runaways. Besides this Mr. James Golden explained that they were not really fugitives, but only colored people going to Canada for their health; and to preserve them from unjust suspicions, their presence must not be revealed.

John could not help imagining the result to each, had he followed her mother's wishes and married Rachel. In several ways she was superior to both his former and present wife, yet in his heart he congratulated himself that he had allowed this worthy minister to wed her. She was happy and content; with him she could not have been, for he could not have entered into pattypan emotions, and his aspirations were of a character that could neither be kept from her nor explained. As it was now he lived within himself, and no one was hurt.

That night there were colored lights hanging from the main mast of a fishing smack down in the cove.

At midnight, seven persons were rowed out to the anchored boat, and climbed aboard.

"In six weeks I will see you—in six weeks!" Jim had said to John as they parted.

Brown went back up the hill and presented the Rev. Walter Warren with half a ton of good, honest hay. He backed his wagon out of the barn and started on his night ride for Hudson.

V

THAT a lone woman, ill much of the time and weak, should use her time and money in an endeavor to make bondsmen free seemed stranger and stranger the more Brown thought about it. And he thought about it a good deal.

There were nearly three million slaves in the United States, and this woman, at the most, only gave freedom to fifty a year—it would take sixty thousand years for her to accomplish her purpose. It was like baling out the ocean with a teaspoon.

And why did she do it? Only for this : that husband and wife should not be separated, nor child taken from mother. In the name of love—the love of man for woman, of parent for child. She would hold love inviolate. And therefore she sought to banish traffic in men and to make them free.

Brown thought about it. He thought about it at work, thought about it as he walked and rode, dreamed of it at night. Soon he began to talk about

the subject of slavery; he discussed it with his father, with the neighbors, and at prayer meetings when he exhorted the brethren, he spoke of slavery as "the one blot on our boasted Christian civilization." That we should affect to believe in the suffering, unselfish Christ and yet buy and sell men and women in the market place was the basest hypocrisy.

After Brown had spoken on the subject in prayer meetings twice in succession the pastor thought it time to say something, too, which he did about as follows:

"My Christian brethren: you have heard what our dear brother, Deacon Brown, has said to-night on the subject of slavery. It is a great theme, just as emigration or commerce are great themes, but why it should be brought in and discussed at a meeting set apart for prayer and praise I cannot understand. We are here to worship God, not to talk about property in Kentucky, and if black people are God's children as Deacon Brown has said four times this one evening, why let God take care of 'em—we will sing from page two sixty two—'Oh, how happy are we, who in Jesus agree, And expect his return from above'—all sing."

"Not yet—you can sing when I 'm done"—

The hymn was started with intent to sing Brown down.

"Silence!" he ordered in a voice that flashed out like a sword leaping from its scabbard.

The singing abruptly ceased. Even the pastor's

voice failed him. There was a silence so intense that it could be heard. Brown left his pew and walked out in front of the dozen expectant people. His grey eyes gleamed and the stiff, bristling hair stood up on his forehead.

The people knew that Brown had temper and courage. They were sure that there would be a burst of invective if not something worse. The preacher cast a hurried look around and calculated the height of the open window. But the storm-cloud had passed and when after an instant Brown spoke, it was in a mild, low voice:

"My friends, I 'm sorry that we have gotten so warm over this subject, and I only wish now to say that I stand by all I have said on this matter of slavery. The black man is God's free child and should be free to worship God, but as long as he is a slave he is not allowed to do so. I wish to say before you all that from this time on I propose to do all that I can to do away with human slavery in my country."

Brown sat down. There was another silence: no one was in haste to sing.

"Is the brother all through?" asked the pastor in his blandest, meetin'-house tone. "Because if he 's not, we want to hear all he has to say of this foreign subject, now!"

There was another pause and then the hymn was sung and the congregation dismissed. The preacher made great show of shaking hands with the Deacon and thanked him for his "manly apology."

"But I did n't apologize," said Brown.

"Why, you said you were sorry—did n't he, sister Jenkins?"

Sister Jenkins was sure he did, so were several others. They tried to laugh it off, but Brown did not smile.

"Now, Brother Brown," said the minister, affectionately taking him by the button-hole, "I 'll show you fifty places in the Bible where slavery is justified."

"And I 'll show you sixty where polygamy is justified!"

"There, there! you know those ignorant black men could not take care of themselves even if they were free—the ideal condition is where the strong care for the weak!"

"But what if the strong degrade the weak?"

"Now, dear Brother, just give me your hand—we 'll say no more. I 'll overlook all your harsh words if you will agree never to mention this subject in prayer-meeting—come, that 's fair!" The preacher held out his hand. Brown refused to take it. "Your terms do not suit," said Brown. He turned and passed out of the church.

The people standing about were plainly with the pastor. He was a stout man of fifty or more—a man of some education and considerable tact. And while he did not expect to convince Brown of his folly, yet he had done better: he had won the sympathy of his people. He had offered to shake hands with Deacon

Brown; Deacon Brown had refused. The next day it was the talk of the town that John Brown had publicly refused to shake hands with his pastor.

The sermon the following Sunday was a powerful one. The text was: "Let every man build over against his own house." It was not a written sermon and there were no notes. The pastor was full of his theme, and his strong point was that if we attended to things near at hand we did well; but to trouble ourselves about distant matters or meddle in questions that did not directly affect us was the direst folly.

In fact, it was a general reminder that every one should attend to his own business, and look after his own soul's welfare. To care for one's wife and children and those directly connected with him was all that a man could possibly do, and to go gallivantin' all over creation for something to find fault with was pesky foolish. Slavery, for instance, was wrong when viewed from certain standpoints. So it was wrong to kill a cow, but we had to kill cattle in order that we might live. God had permitted slavery through thousands of years, and he was gradually doing away with it; and if we would only give God time, He would smooth out all the crooked places. "And finally, brethren, let each man build over against his own house."

It was a powerful sermon. Much of it was delivered straight at Deacon Brown's head, and there was considerable craning of necks to see how the Deacon took his medicine, but he never flinched.

But the sermon did not silence John Brown. At the

grocery, the post-office, or on the street corners he would discuss the question of slavery with any one who cared to talk about it. In all of the Southern, and several of the Northern states, it was a crime to teach a Negro to read, and a bill was before the Ohio legislature making it a penal offense "to hire, harbor, feed or encourage in any way any Negro or any person in whose veins there is supposed to be Negro blood, until such Negro had proven before the nearest magistrate that he or she is not a fugitive."

Brown protested strongly against this law, which he claimed was against the American maxim, that a man must be considered innocent until he is proven guilty. But the preacher retorted that "a Negro was not a man, but a nigger," and so the argument moved in a circle.

Had Brown been willing to let the matter drop, his neighbors would have taken him back into full fellowship and said no more. But he was one of that kind of men who, when they harbor a thought, are taken captive by it: an idea possessed him.

Seven weeks had come and gone since he bid goodbye to Jim Slivers, and now Jim had come again. Not by night this time, but in daytime and alone.

Jim carried a stout stick over his shoulder and a handkerchief knotted up in way of baggage. He was dusty and begrimed, having evidently come on a long journey; yet there was a half grin lurking around his mouth as he walked into the tannery yard where Brown was alone.

"An' how 's my wife?" asked Jim the first thing.

"Who?"

"My darling—fifty years old last May and my darling still!"

"Oh, you mean that woman who took you for the ghost of her husband?"

"Of course; go tell her I 've come for her at last—at last!"

"Don't be foolish, Jim. What 's the news—have you seen Margaret?"

"Call her the Madam, please."

"Well, then, have you seen the Madam?"

"I reckon; else how 'd I fetch this letter to you from her?"

Jim reached into the inside of his vest and brought out a letter, folded, sealed and directed to "John Smith."

"Is it for me?" asked Brown as he looked at the superscription.

"I 'spect, leastwise 't aint for me."

Brown broke the seal and read:

Dear John Smith:

The bearer has told me of your great kindness and the manly assistance you rendered in getting his freight through. Your helping me, thus endorsing my work, has given me renewed courage and zeal.

The present case is a very pathetic one; Jim will tell you of it.

May Heaven bless you.

Sincerely your friend,

M.

There was no date, no signature and his own name was replaced by another, but the very omissions were precious to Brown: it left something to the imagination—there was an understanding.

To love and to have an understanding! no happier fate can come to a man than the thought of a complete understanding with a woman.

Still, Brown had no idea that he loved this woman—far from it. She was simply an old acquaintance and he was interested in her—that 's all. Besides that, he was a married man and had no right to love any woman but his wife.

He read the letter twice, standing there in the tannery yard. Jim picked up a stick and began whittling on it carelessly as if time were no object.

"She says 'the present case is a very pathetic one'—what does she mean—your freight?"

"She says it 's what?"

"Pathetic."

"What 's that?"

"Sorrowful."

"Lordy, she 's right. I 've walked eighteen mile since sun-up to tell you 'bout it."

"Well, go on!"

"One buck nigger, one wench, and three pickaninnies!"

"You mean a man, his wife and their three children?"

"Yes."

"Well, where are they? Speak up quick!"

"Eighteen mile back, I told you—two pickaninnies sick and the wench she 's plum tuckered out and wants to die—all were sold an' to be separated—Missus up and bribes Sheriff an' he lets 'em run away to river—I meets 'em in a skiff, gets 'em 'cross—been three weeks on way—all hands tuckered and camped in woods—babies sick—that 's all there is 'bout it."

Jim spat out this explanation all at one mouthful. He stopped as suddenly as he had begun, and went on with his whittling.

"And you have walked on ahead and now want me to go back with you?"

"Well, I reckon!"

"How shall we go?"

"The load of hay 's all right."

It was near noon and the children were playing around the house. To load up hay and cart it away would excite their curiosity, for hay was hauled to the barn, not away from it. Then the neighbors might ask questions, too, for Brown's teaming was usually done by hired men, so all things considered, it was resolved best to wait until night.

This was accordingly done. After the children were all abed, Brown and Jim adjusted the hay rack on the wagon bed, laying all the boards on top so there would be "plenty of space in the hold for storage," as Jim expressed it. Mrs. Brown held the lantern and the two men piled on a goodly load and bound it down with the boom pole. They hitched on a stout team of young horses, and drove away, promising to return

by daylight. Mrs. Brown slept with one eye open and listened with both ears for the rattle of the returning wagon, but she did not hear it.

Daylight came and the children were up earlier than usual. Mrs. Brown sent them back to bed, but it was no use, they were thoroughly wide awake. They had breakfast without the master of the house and the good mother had to deal in white lies to stop the questionings—children are so very curious.

It was near nine o'clock before a boy came running up the hill to tell Mrs. Brown that her husband was down by the tannery badly hurt.

VI

THE night was dark, but Brown knew his road and sent the horses along at a good stiff pace.

Ten miles were turned off—fifteen: it was so dark that Jim could not see the stones he had placed in the road to mark the spot where they should sheer off into the forest. In an hour it became evident that the place had been passed; so they cramped, backed up, turned around and headed back. Jim walked slowly ahead, peering with his eyes and feeling with his feet for the little pyramid of stones. An hour went by in anxious search when a joyous little whistle from Jim announced that the lost was found.

The horses were tied securely to a clump of stout saplings and the two men moved off into the blackness of the wood. A peculiar clucking call from Jim was soon answered by a similar sound, and under the drooping boughs of a protecting pine were the refugees.

Brown assured the unseen fugitives that they were

among friends as he put his hands down on two woolly heads. He lifted a baby form in each strong arm and started back for the wagon, the others following.

The fevered faces of the children pillowed themselves on the man's neck and he knew that hunger, sleeplessness and damp had done their work, and if the children could not be given good care and that quickly, their earthly troubles would soon be over.

Reaching the load of hay the trap door in the bottom of the wagon was pushed up and the black man and his wife crawled in, and the three children were passed in after. The horses were unhitched and the northward drive begun.

Brown restrained the impatient steeds, as the road in places was rough and in the darkness the ruts could not be avoided, for he was mindful that the wagon had no springs, and the thought of the aching heads below made him lessen each possible jolt and jar.

Jim lay on his back, looking up at the sky, where the stars now began to twinkle, and chanted a wild, wierd song that had been passed down through the generations from some Congo jungle. Melody got the better of his spirit and the hum nearly grew into song, when John ordered silence. Then there was only the patter of unshod hoofs on the hard road and the monotonous rumble of the heavy wagon.

Daylight was beginning to gleam in the east, with Hudson still ten miles away.

It was very evident that to push straight on would

reveal to the curious villagers that the drive had been a long one.

Two hours earlier would have placed the "goods" safely in the cave while all Hudson was abed, as it was now all Hudson would be astir.

What was to be done?

To wait until friendly night came again meant possible death to the sick children, for the food they had was insufficient and not of the right kind. To drive straight ahead now meant a buzz of idle talk that might not be so idle after all; to wait an hour, rub the horses dry and go in slowly, would attract little attention, as it would be thought that Brown was merely drawing hay from his farm. Then a chance could be taken when no one was around to transfer the fugitives from the wagon to the cave.

This latter plan seemed the best, so they adopted it.

It was near nine o'clock when John Brown's gray team was seen coming down the hill into Hudson. There was a load of hay on the wagon, and of course the driver could not apply his brake. Yet the team was strong and able to hold the load by the neckyoke, anyway.

But suddenly an accident occurred. It was the worst kind of an accident that can possibly befall a man driving two nervous horses. If a wheel comes off the axle only drops and drags; should a rein break you simply pull on one line until your horses are in the ditch or against the fence; should the breeching

give way, you keep your running steeds in the middle of the road and trust to luck; if your horses kick, lean back so you will not get hit and let them kick; if they shy and lunge to one side they can only tip you over.

But if you are driving a spirited team hitched to a wagon, down a steep hill, and you have no brake, and suddenly the neckyoke gives way, and the wagon tongue drops to the ground, you had better take a last flashing look at this beautiful world and commend your soul to God.

For quicker than the flash of thought, the horses will lunge forward and no man born of woman can hold them. At such an instant the frantic strength of the mad brutes is in league with the law of gravitation, and Death crouches near and laughs.

When that wagon tongue dropped and began ploughing a furrow in the dust, Brown made one heroic effort to pull the horses into the ditch, but the wagon was on their heels and they shot forward straight for the entrance to the bridge. They were going like a comet, when the point of the tongue struck a stone, and the tongue, acting as a fulcrum, lifted the wagon straight ten feet into the air. The load of hay, boomed fast to the rack, shot forward, fell to one side and turned bottom side up as it slipped over the embankment. The horses, with the wheels of the wagon, dashed through the bridge like the wind and on up the village street. Half the town rushed down to the bridge where lay the toppled load of hay. But where

was the driver? A score of people looked on with staring eyes, all talking at once. A peculiar voice was heard! where did it come from?

Some one looked up at the top of the old wood covered bridge. There on the roof of the bridge, resting as if it had been lifted and placed there by giant hands, was a wagon box. Standing up in this box were a very black Negro, a Negro woman, and clinging to them, too frightened to cry, three little black children.

"Was you driving this team?" called a voice from the crowd.

"No," answered the black man.

"Then who was?"

"Two white men."

"Where are they?"

"Under that pile of hay!"

VII

WHEN John Brown and Jim Slivers were dug out from under that pile of hay—good honest hay—they were insensible. But they did not die: destiny had reserved them for a different fate, so a few dashes of cold water brought them to. Mrs. Brown arrived on the scene very much frightened, but quite relieved to find that she was not a widow. Her husband had just opened his eyes and requested that no more water be flung at him.

A ladder had been brought from the saw mill and the family of unhappy blacks were assisted from their elevated position. But with that cruel sense of humor that rustics often possess, the wagon bed was left on its perch as a monument to the infamy of its owner.

Mrs. Brown wept, and seeing the five trembling colored mortals, fell a-scolding.

"You 're a fool, John Brown, I told you not to do it!" And seeing the gaping crowd around, she addressed her remarks to them and absolved herself from

all responsibility in the matter. There was a slight scalp wound on Brown's head and as he sat up the red drops slowly trickled down his face. The sight of blood brought back the wifely sympathy and Mrs. Brown tied up the shaggy head with a handkerchief.

Jim still smoked. He expected one of two things would surely occur: they would all be arrested or they would have to fight. He was ready to accept whichever horn of the dilemma came, but neither was in store.

Brown was still slightly dazed. He put his hand to his head in apparent helplessness and tried to stand on his feet. The crowd were inclined to laugh: Brown had been caught in the very act of nigger stealing—ha, ha, ha!

Suddenly a white-haired woman appeared on the scene; a strong woman whose only mark of age was her white hair. She had come across the bridge and having pushed her way through the crowd, gave a quick glance about and seemed to comprehend the situation. She saw the trembling Negroes, she saw that Brown was injured, she guessed that Brown was the cause of the Negroes being there and that the people standing about considered the situation funny: and moreover she saw that they had no intention of giving succor or aid to these refugees.

"The jail 's the place for them!" shouted a blatant voice.

Ruth Crosby had no very fixed ideas on the subject of human rights—she was too busy doing good to

formulate a creed—but she had a great, generous motherly heart.

She took the sick baby out of the colored woman's arms, and whispered to her black sister that she too was a mother, and that no harm should come to her or the babes.

"Come," said Ruth, "we will go!"

Brown got his strength back, and going over took the second child.

The crowd, now silent, parted and Ruth led the way through the bridge, carrying the black baby. Brown followed with Baby Number Two, then came Mrs. Brown leading Number Three, the Negro man and his wife next, while in the rear came Jim Slivers calmly smoking; behind all trooped half a hundred villagers of both sexes, all ages, and all sorts and conditions.

"To my house, not yours!" said John to Ruth. So Ruth turned to the left and the procession passed up the little slope to the residence of John Brown, on the outskirts of the town. The villagers fell off by twos or threes and went home to talk it over, so when Brown's front gate was reached, Jim Slivers alone was the tail to the kite.

The fugitives were not put in the cave this time: they were given the best rooms the house afforded. Ruth's sole occupation for many years had been nursing the sick: she was an expert. She remained and took sole charge of the children, and they were ill—no mistake.

Brown loaded a long squirrel rifle that hung over the kitchen door, and set it in the corner. Then he busied himself at the woodpile, fully determined that he would allow no neighbors, officer, sheriff or whatnot to enter the yard.

It 's a serious thing to arrest a man in a rural district; and especially so in a pioneer country. If a citizen has property, a fair name, and chief of all the reputation of being able to fight, he might commit almost any crime, even to murder, and still go free.

So no constable or sheriff came to Brown's. They knew better. The majesty of the law can wait when there is a strong chance of its agent being perforated with lead. Brown was not a quarrelsome man, but he had a moral dignity which, added to his physical strength, made him respected. Only a year before he had trounced the town bully with a hickory gad, and on several occasions he had gone alone to objectionable persons and told them to leave town, and they always went.

When night came the baby was no better. Through stress of hardship and excitement, the mother's milk had failed and the little sufferer had actually been starved. The second child was about two years old and the baby only six months: they were too ill to go on—what was to be done?

"Leave them here," said Ruth. "The father, mother and the four-year-old girl can go on ahead, and when the babies get strong we will send them forward."

So that night Jim Slivers took the three and started for Conneaut on foot. It was the best thing to do—get them to a place of safety at once. And as for the babies, Brown promised that they would be safely handed over to their parents as soon as they were well and strong.

Hudson now fairly bubbled with excitement. How long had Deacon Brown been in this business? Some said for ten years and they even gave the exact number of thousand slaves that he had stolen. He had gotten rich at it, they were sure. It was hinted that when a goodly lot of Negroes were gotten together in Canada, they were pounced upon and sent by the ship-load around the St. Lawrence river to the Atlantic and then down to Charleston, S. C., where they were sold at auction.

Nobody mentioned these rumors to Brown—they knew better. People avoided him on the street; if he approached a group, they would instantly disperse; when he entered the post-office, all conversation would suddenly cease; some treated him with awkward politeness, and were evidently afraid of him, but when his back was turned, they winked at their neighbors, and smiled.

Even John Brown's father shook his head and said that the laws of the land should be respected. In the whole village he had but one staunch supporter, and that was Ruth Crosby, and it must be owned that it was largely accident that landed her on his side and not on the other.

Women are more loyal than men; in surgical operations their chances of recovery are better; in spite of the pains of childbirth they live longer than men; when worst comes to worst they are braver. Just as a tigress can whip a lion, or the she-wolf with cubs is more than a match for a bear, so does a true woman rise to the level of events. In times of disgrace the woman clings to the man, where too often if the man can escape he does so, and allows his mate to face the pack alone.

Ruth Crosby had been touched by the sight of those suffering blacks: she saw that the crowd was against them and straightway her indignation joined hands with her mother-love, and casting a look of defiance on the mob she stood sponsor for the friendless. It was a very womanly act on the part of Ruth, as those who have seen women in war-time know full well.

And once having committed herself to the side of the slave, and espoused John Brown's cause, the sense of loyalty in her heart, and the "stubbornness" in her nature would not allow her to retract. When petty persecution followed, it only cemented the bond, for it is injustice that makes martyrs. An attempt to make a woman give up either a man or a sentiment only makes her cling the closer. Thus does time and chance push us like pawns upon this chess-board of life.

People looked askance at the Widow Crosby as she walked on the street, and the neighbor women ceased to run in and chat, she was left quite alone—the hint

having been given out that "she was not all that she should be."

The two colored babies got well and strong: the product of John Brown's dairy seemed to agree with them. Children know no caste; they never draw the color line, and the Brown children thought the Negro babies very charming additions to the family. And one Sunday when the Browns filed into church to fill three pews there was a shiny black youngster, well dressed and clean, among the little flock.

Many in the audience tittered, one man guffawed aloud, several snorted with indignation and a full half dozen tramped out. Altogether though, the sight of the colored baby was rather amusing to the audience than otherwise: just as a cat on the stage makes a laugh, or a dog sniffing up the aisle takes all attention away from the preacher. The minister noticing the commotion, arose from behind his high pulpit, and adjusting his brass-rimmed spectacles, looked rebukingly around for the cause of the trouble. At last his glance fell on the black baby, and the storm cloud in his serious visage grew denser.

He tried to catch Deacon Brown's eye: at last he thought he had, and he pantomimed that Brown should remove the black baby. But Brown did not take the hint. Then the preacher, realizing that he could not compete as an attraction against that wee darling, cleared his throat and in a solemn voice said: "Brother Brown, oblige me by removing that object which you have wrongfully brought into this sacred place."

But Brother Brown was both blind and deaf.

The hymn was announced, the Scripture read, the long prayer gone through with, and the sermon begun. And all during the sermon the black baby slept with its head in John Brown's lap.

It was certainly a very presumptuous thing for Brown to do—taking a Negro to meetin'. For there was a question whether Negroes had souls; indeed several books had been written, proving that they had not.

Perhaps when Brown got home that day after church he congratulated himself that he had won in the little game of bluff, but his satisfaction was slightly cooled the next day when he received an official notice to present himself in ten days and show cause why he should not be expelled from church.

Ruth Crosby was also presented with a similar notice.

The day of the examination came, and the defendants were both present.

The indictment recited how Ruth Crosby and John Brown had harbored runaway slaves, against the peace and good order of the community, and against the laws of God and the state. Further than this, they had taught Negroes to read.

This last accusation was quite gratuitous, but the intent was to make the charge as damning as possible.

The minister had the clerk read the charges, and then the senior Deacon of the church got up and proposed that if the defendants would simply plead guilty to the charges and ask the forgiveness of the

brethren assembled, promising not to repeat the offense, the meeting could then be turned into one of prayer and praise. The good old man expressed his love for the Widow Crosby and John Brown and spoke of his high regard for their characters; he recited how even David had fallen, but the Lord reinstated him in favor—why should they not do the same by these erring ones?

The preacher endorsed this conciliatory appeal, he showed how it contained the true Christian spirit—a slowness to condemn and a readiness to forgive. He sat down and there was a breathless silence when Brown arose to reply.

He simply plead guilty to the charges as made; he had done nothing but that he thought was right—that is, he believed he had done the will of God.

"Do you think it is the will of God that you should harbor runaway slaves?" severely asked the preacher.

"I do," said John Brown.

"And you, Widow Crosby?" said the preacher, facing the woman.

"I do," said Ruth Crosby.

The accused were asked to withdraw. They did so and the session was continued behind locked doors.

The next day John Brown and Ruth Crosby were notified that their names were stricken from the church books "on account of conduct unbecoming to professing Christians."

VIII

CHURCH trials often afford considerable satisfaction to church members. Spite and a spirit of revenge are never absent on such occasions and the opportunities for pokes under the fifth rib are readily embraced. Feuds sometimes find vent in church trials, and it must be admitted that a church trial is not so bad as a vendetta. But when there is a church trial the devil laughs, and so do the infidels. In fact, the village infidel—the corner grocery atheist—is usually more interested in the issue than the average church member.

The scoffers were jubilant when John Brown was "turned out o' church." They were all unmindful of the inconsistency of their position, which assumed that all church members were hypocrites, anyway, and failed to see the logical sequence that the man turned out must at least be different from those who discarded him.

Then to be turned out of church in those days, before heresy was popular, meant disgrace; it was not

many years before, that all criminals were tried by the church and people had a fixed idea that if a jury of Christian people said a man was bad, it must be so.

Children ever adopt the opinions of their elders, and when the grown folks in a community cease to respect a man, the youngsters tell him so. The growing boys of civilized parents are always cruel, and the weak-minded, the drunken, the friendless are legitimate targets in any village for mud balls and decayed vegetables. The victim of the stocks was ever the butt of all the cruel pranks that youth could invent, and no sooner is the best of men bound with cords than we scourge him, spit upon him and crown him with thorns.

The night after that church trial at Hudson merry havoc was played with Ruth Crosby's flower beds, the front door of her house was smeared with tar, and in the morning several dead cats adorned the little porch.

The next day she locked the cottage where she had lived so many busy, useful years and took up her residence with the family of John Brown.

There was no intention of retreating from the position they had taken on the subject of human rights; the more they studied the theme of slavery, the plainer it was to them that their course was right. The more they thought of slavery, the firmer were their ideas concerning its iniquity.

A letter was sent to Margaret Brydges telling her of the mishap to the load of hay, and how they had been turned out of church simply because the load

upset. The whole matter was treated lightly, even to Ruth Crosby's connection with it. But Mrs. Brydges had had a little experience herself in ostracism and she knew what it meant.

Margaret sent a prompt reply expressing her sympathy, and quoting the beatitude, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

The letter further explained that a Negro who could read and write was a factor in freedom's cause and that the education of the Negro meant the honeycombing of the "peculiar institution." So the rabid fear on the part of slave holders about the blacks being taught had a basis in fact; and from their standpoint the placing of a penalty on the three R's was a perfectly justifiable move. Men who wish to hold other men in leash have good reason for preferring mental darkness rather than light.

So a part of Margaret Brydges' plan of campaign was to educate. Teaching blacks to read and write was a sure paving of the way for complete emancipation. Vast numbers of slaves were sunk so low that they did not realize their condition and had no conception of what freedom meant. But to teach a man to read was to supply him the tools for further progress.

Through Margaret's influence, and by the help of certain funds which she had collected and given, the

college at Oberlin now received colored people on exactly the same footing as whites. Her ambition was to start a school that would be a feeder for Oberlin.

To this end Margaret had turned her house into a school. The scholars ranged in years from five to fifty; and after explaining this in her letter she ended with a strong appeal that Ruth Crosby should leave Hudson at once, meeting her in Cincinnati and assist in this plan of conducting a preparatory school for Oberlin.

Ruth had lived in Hudson for thirty-two years. In all that time she had not been more than a few miles away. She was now fifty years old and to go away and leave home behind seemed like leaving the earth for another world.

She hesitated about accepting, and really questioned her own ability to do the work successfully, and further than this she half felt that this rich Mrs. Brydges was endeavoring to do good by indirection in putting forth the invitation: and of all things, she shrank from being a dependent.

Ruth resolved to stay in Hudson and fight it out—live down the disgrace; and if possible, gradually win the town over to her way of thinking. This she would do by the integrity of her life: and through love and gentleness she believed that the harshness and the prejudice would melt away.

So she wrote to Mrs. Brydges thanking her for her kind offer of a home and a position as teacher, and telling her that much as she sympathized with the mis-

sion of giving education to colored people and whites alike, yet she felt her duty lay in Hudson.

She directed and sealed the letter and took it down to the post-office. After posting the missive and making a few small purchases, she started back towards John Brown's.

Some noisy children making mud pies in the street called after her; the cry was taken up by a bigger boy on the sidewalk, and as she hastened her walk the urchins in the street followed her, shouting, "Nigger stealer! nigger stealer!" She suddenly grew nervous and started to run, when a stone went whizzing past her head.

Just then the mother of one of the youngsters appeared on the scene, and grabbing her own particular hopeful, cuffed his ears vigorously as punishment for his insolence, and at this the embryo mob suddenly scattered.

But the deed was done—the die was cast!

Hudson was no longer home to Ruth Crosby—she packed up a few necessary articles and the stage that went southward the following day carrying a letter for Mrs. Margaret Brydges at Cincinnati also carried the woman who wrote it.

IX

WHEN a man concentrates all of his energies on one business he may succeed and he may not. If he divides his time and talent among several enterprises, his chances of success are much lessened: yet if he has a single eye for "number one," he still may arrive.

But should he allow religion, politics, philanthropy, love or art to creep into his waking hours, so as to become a passion, his financial doom is sealed.

When John Brown took philanthropy into his life, he signed an application for bankruptcy. His time was now divided between thoughts of Margaret, education of black people and business. Business is a jealous god, and says to its votary, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." So commerce was wroth with John Brown and fortune ceased to smile upon him.

He had lost favor with his neighbors; and many people who owed him, no longer thought it necessary to pay. Some of these people had borrowed funds from him. And all those whom he owed wanted their

money at once. Had he been able to pay, his creditors would not have cared for the money, but now they refused to accept notes, where such obligations were always before accepted in settlement. Still things were not actually desperate, for periods of financial stringency come to every man engaged in trade.

Two years before Brown had signed security for a friend—just a matter of form, you know. This friend suddenly disappeared and the holder of the note demanded immediate payment from the endorser. The amount was twelve hundred dollars—not much in our time, but a large sum then for a country merchant to meet off-hand. Brown could not pay it, and the sheriff appeared with many apologies and a writ of attachment against the tannery.

Then the small creditors became more frantic than ever for their money; and the debtors increased in indifference according to the square of the difficulties into which their creditor was plunged.

A singleness of purpose is the prime requisite in commerce—the whole structure is founded on selfishness; and had Brown been willing to avail himself of a technicality and repudiate the claim of twelve hundred dollars he could have pulled through. But he scorned any action that savored of duplicity—he had agreed to pay this amount if his friend did not, and he would do it.

Besides this, there were other schemes and other ambitions in his head. By nature he was a pioneer: he loved the wildness of the woods, and the sense of

power that comes to all men who are able to cope with untamed nature was to him a delight.

Civilization hates individuality. Its desire and tendency is to iron men out to one common level. It prescribes and proscribes; it limits and sets bounds; and it has ever been ready to apply the thumb-screws to him who will not conform to its edicts. For the man ahead of his time, civilization has the rack. Civilization had said to John Brown: "Be one of us, conform to our ways, accept our opinions, do as we do, and we will hold fellowship with you; but if you persist in being better or worse than your neighbors, we will scourge and spit upon you."

Brown heard the voice—it spoke in no uncertain tone. He longed for the solitude of the forest, and the sufficing majesty of the mountains. As wounded animals go away to the woods to be healed (or to die) and as the Indian woman feeling the pains of approaching childbirth hides away under the friendly boughs, so do stricken souls turn to Nature.

But there were a trinity of powers brought to bear on Brown, all counseling a move. There was the restless spirit of the pioneer; the tuppenny persecution by neighbors; and the desire to be in a place where he could shelter fleeing slaves, and teach them if meet to read and write and worship God.

Where to go? that was the question. Emigration was pushing through to the West, and to go to the frontier would be out of line of communication with Cincinnati. But Pennsylvania was not far away—Penn-

sylvania with its rich valleys, its dense forests and mountain fastnesses.

An arrangement was entered into with the creditors whereby Brown gave over into their hands the tannery, store, residence and farm. He was allowed to keep his live stock and three hundred dollars in money. With his two oldest sons he counted the sheep—there were nearly four hundred of them, forty head of cattle and a dozen horses. The subject was laid before his wife and children. Youngsters always want to move and Mrs. Brown was sick and weary from the trouble that had come to them. They were all eager and hungry to get away.

There were nine children in the family. As they are to play important parts in our story, their names in order of ages are given here: John, Jr., Jason, Owen, Ruth, Frederick, Sarah, Watson, Salmon and Charles. The first five on the list were children of Dianthe Lusk.

They were a healthy, rollicking lot of youngsters as one ever saw: wild, young barbarians, all, as children should be, for the first requisite in the making of a man is that he should be a good animal.

John, Jr., was seventeen and Charles was less than a year old. It was certainly a brood to be proud of, and like the Roman mother of old, John and Mary Brown counted their children as jewels. So they were rich, and why not? Is a man poor with all these flocks and herds, these wagon loads of household goods, and besides that a loyal wife and nine hearty children?

Far from it, the Browns were happy now and rich. They had everything that they needed and they were going away to find breathing room.

Joy is seldom found pure except in times of transition. These were joyous moments.

And yet it was a little come-down from Deacon and general first citizen of the town, to an emigrant who had been turned out of the church and whose exodus caused no regret except to kinsmen. Then as to the children a captious observer might have noted that none had the clear-cut facial lines of their father—they lacked his individuality; and if the captious observer referred to above had been inclined to quibble he might have gone farther and summed up the case by saying that they were evidently not "love-children."

But they were a happy lot as they moved away from Hudson that fine September day, driving their flocks and herds before them.

The father had cautioned the boys to restrain their glee, but he had hard work to keep down the cheers, and as they passed by houses where objectionable neighbors lived John, Jr., and Jason sent stones flying at dogs as a last goodbye, and Owen even offered to fight certain boys who sat on the fence watching the procession. Once well away from the village the father called a halt. He gathered the family together, read a chapter of Scripture and then prayed to God to bless them in the new undertaking; a hymn was sung, and then they moved forward—eagerly, merrily, hopefully forward. All of their troubles lay behind.

BOOK FOUR

CHAPTER I

ASTERN Kansas is as fair a land as ever the sun looked down upon. Sublime scenery is only purhased at the cost of fertile soil. But Kansas has splendid sweeps of rolling land that need but to be tickled with a plow to laugh a harvest; and across these rich prairies are streams whose banks are lined with beautiful groves that gladden the heart of the traveller.

The diversity of treeless plain and wooded slope, of open space and running stream, of protecting hill and sunny outlook, was first a paradise for the hunter, and then a refuge and delight to the stock raiser and agriculturist.

In 1854 when the United States government opened up the Territory for settlement there was an instant rush of emigrants. Any citizen could preempt one hundred and sixty acres of land, and by living on it a certain length of time and making certain improvements he was given a full title to his homestead.

From the Northern States came the "prairie schooners" of New Englanders and their hardy sons who had settled in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana or Illinois, now pushing on to this new Eldorado.

And from across the sister state of Missouri poured another tide of restless wealth seekers from the South.

For the first time in the history of our country Jamestown and Plymouth Rock came into serious collision. Different in temperment, different in religion, different in taste and tradition, each with virtues that the other did not appreciate and faults that the other could not understand, is it any wonder that they clashed? Besides all this those were times of mad rivalry; every one desired to secure the best place and the man who first drove down his stakes was the man who owned the land. Under such conditions of course disputes would occur. Two men might claim the same corner of God's earth and there would have to be much readjusting and patient endurance or else—fight.

It is needless to say that when disputes occurred between Yankee and Southron, that South sided with South and North with North. Yet even then all might have simmered down, and the young Romeos married the fair Juliets and peace and plenty come to the houses of Montague and Capulet, were it not for slavery.

Slave labor and free cannot exist side by side and each retain its individuality. The free labor becomes enervated or the slave restless and discontented. Fur-

thermore there was a vast political question at issue —it was whether Kansas should send to Washington representatives who would champion the Southern cause or should they be men with Yankee proclivities.

In October, 1854, four sons of John Brown moved to Kansas, and took up claims ten miles from the village of Osawatomie. John, Jr., and Jason were married; Owen and Frederick bachelors; but Frederick had a sweetheart in the East whom he expected to send for.

Each of these four men had one hundred and sixty acres of land: that is, they owned just a section, or a square mile between them. Where the four corners of their claims came together they built four log houses; three of these houses were small, with dirt roofs—a bare shelter from the storm—the other was quite a respectable edifice as log houses go.

Owen established a store and postoffice and they called their embryo city Brownsville. Running through their land was a beautiful stream and near at hand was plenty of wood. They had a few sheep, a dozen head of cattle and as many horses.

They were very happy, were these pioneers, happy and full of hope. All that winter they worked building their houses and barns. Sundays Yankee neighbors would come from miles away and they would hold "meetin" and make the rafters ring with sounds of praise. Game was plentiful; for while the buffaloes had pushed on to the west, deer, wild turkeys, prairie chickens and water fowl were to be had in abundance. So they feasted, and worked and sang; and when a

fifth brother, Salmon, came on a few months later they had much to relate in way of harmless adventure and amusing incident.

These Browns were not rich, but they had enough so that they could live comfortably until a crop could be produced. They brought with them garden, farm and flower seeds, grape vines and several hundred fruit trees; and the last of February had scarcely melted the winter's snow before they were planting their orchards. On March 30th an election was to occur at which representatives were to be chosen for the Territorial Legislature. There was much feeling on the subject of whether Kansas should be a slave state or not, and at this election the matter would be practically decided, for the Representatives chosen would have the making of the laws.

Emigration from the North had exceeded that from Missouri and the South two to one, so the Anti-Slavery men felt secure. In fact the Browns were very sure that this election would decide the matter once for all. They were too busy attending to their farming to take a very active interest in the matter, but when travellers came to their cabins from time to time, they expressed themselves vigorously upon the subject. The New England spirit was strong in their veins, town meetin' day with the right of a freeman's franchise was the most glorious day in the year; and early in the morning of the 30th day of March, the five Brown brothers started afoot for the polling place ten miles away.

On every little knoll the prairie chickens drummed and strutted, great flocks of plover went whirring past, and at all the ponds were green-head ducks and dancing cranes. Here and there across the prairie could be seen the curling smoke rising from some settler's cabin and at long intervals teams were plowing straight furrows across the virgin sod. The blackness of the burnt grass was giving away to greenest green; and to men raised in a country that could only be farmed after a long, painful cutting down of trees, pulling out of stumps and piling up of stones, this beautiful land seemed an Eden indeed.

The five stalwart brothers whistled and sang and shouted as they walked. The bright sunshine magnified objects across the rolling mounds and played strange tricks with visual senses. Houses miles away could be seen turned upside down against the horizon and for several minutes there was a vision suspended in mid-air of a great mob of men on horseback and in wagons miles and miles away. Even the tropical seas cannot compete with a sun-lit plain in optical illusions.

At several cabins they were joined by other men, also going to vote. All were walking, for horses must be saved for the plow. In two hours there were a full dozen men in the party.

"Hello!" suddenly cried Jason Brown, "why, here's old man Blanton, he should be at the polls, for he showed me only yesterday his certificate as Judge of Election signed by Governor Reeder."

A buckboard drawn by an old white horse was just coming up out of the little valley that wound around a low hummock.

"What 's this, neighbor Blanton, are we off in our date—we thought it was 'lection day?"

"And so 'tis gentlemen, but you 'd better go back?"

"Why?"

"Why? what a question, is it possible you have n't heard? Every ravine for twenty-five miles has been filled for two days with Missourians, and they are votin'. Go back, for if they know you are Anti-Slavery men your lives won't be safe—lots of them are fighting drunk!"

"But you are a Judge of Election—did you accept their votes?"

"Did I? No, that 's the trouble; when I refused to accept the ballots of any but actual settlers they dragged me out and threatened to hang me. When I still refused they put in a man of their own, and I 've barely escaped with my life. Go back, I pray you, or there 'll be bloodshed!"

"We 're not the kind that go back!" shouted Owen Brown, "forward march, boys!" And forward they went.

Another half mile brought them to a ridge, from whence they could look across at the little settlement two miles away. A dozen huts looking like dolls' houses dotted the plain; one straight white steeple pointed to the zenith, and a little to one side the polling place could be plainly noted. Around it was a dark

moving blot of black on the green of the prairie. As they approached this dark blot it turned to rusty gray and separated into parts; and horses, wagons and men stood out plainly.

From several of the wagons flags and banners were flying. One of the flag poles was ornamented with a long string of waving hemp, another had a white flag with a skull and crossbones rudely daubed upon it. A whiskey keg upside down was carried on another pole.

The Browns noticed with a little alarm that these men were armed with knives, scythes on poles, pitchforks, and guns of every period of antiquity.

They were evidently organized, for there was a commissary wagon in charge of a sober man, while everybody else seemed to be rearing-tearing drunk.

"Here they come! here they come, all good honest Pros, every one," shouted a blatant Missourian. On his black slouch hat was fastened a bunch of hemp and over his shoulder was a double-barreled shot gun.

"Whiskey first, then vote. It 's a matter of conscience—no man need to keep slaves if he don't want, but he shall not deny the privilege to any one else —whoop!"

The newcomers were cheered and offered whiskey and hardtack. Around the shanty was a dense crowd, and Owen soon saw that if his party voted the "Pro" ticket they would be allowed to get through to the window and cast their ballots, but if they attempted

to vote "Anti" there would be trouble. The Yankees scattered through the crowd and Jason picked out a Pro who was talkative, and who had not been drinking so long that he was ill-natured.

"You a settler here, I s'pose," remarked Jason.

"Hell, no, I 'm from Mizzoory!"

"All your crowd from over the line?"

"Wall, I reckon—a dollar a day with licker and grub haint so bad!"

"No, indeed."

"We 'll vote the dam Yanks to perdition and then fight 'em, or we 'll fight 'em and vote arterwards—two hunderd of us here—two comp'nies—there 's a comp'ny at every votin' place in Kansas, an' if that 's not nuff we vote at two places! whoop la! No free niggers in ourn—free whiskey 's the only thing for we!"

A horseman in semi-uniform came galloping across the prairie and handed a message to the captain of one of the companies. It was an order that more voters were needed at Ballou, twelve miles away. An order was given for one of the companies to go. The men tumbled pell-mell into wagons and onto the horses, and with wild cheers and yells, they drove away followed by their four-horse commissary wagon.

Jason and Owen quickly consulted and thought this a good time to vote. They got their little company together, gave each man an Anti-Slavery ballot and began pushing up to the polling window.

"Less see your ballots, boys. I 'm here to see that

all is done on the squar!" said a big fellow in butternut. Evidently this man was a joker, for the crowd laughed at his sally.

"I 'm commissioned by Congress to see that only honest men vote—show up the paper, pardner."

"I show my ballot to nobody," replied Jason firmly.

The man jostled against Owen and began crowding him out of the line, others crowded against him and he swore at them roundly, ordering them back, yelling, "Quit your pushin', you dam galoots!"

And the more cries of "quit pushin'" were uttered, the more pushing was done.

In five minutes the little company of a dozen men were pushed clear past the building. They stood well together, though, and began now to crowd back. Backward and forward they surged, and gradually they were allowed to work their way up to the building. They reached it, but they were on the wrong side from the window: in the scramble they had lost their bearings. A big laugh went up at their expense, as the mob watched their discomfiture.

"We are actual settlers, all of us, we are Anti-Slavery men and we are going to vote!" shouted Jason.

"Hear him—just as if any one had interfered!" answered the big man in butternut.

"You have interfered—you are a coward and a bully—you are armed and we are not, yet my brother, here, only a boy, can whip you in a fair fight—will you fight him, Salmon?"

"I guess I will," answered Salmon, as he shed his coat.

The crowd fell back. This sudden move had surprised them. There was a brief lull in the yells, and then the crowd called on the big man to go in and kill the Yank. There was no backing out—the big joker must fight or stand convicted of cowardice.

He blanched perceptibly, hesitated, pulled at his dirty yellow beard, sighed and slipped his coat. A ring was made and it looked as if the tall, slender lad of nineteen had more than met his match in the big Missourian.

The big man made a rush like a mad bull. Salmon stepped lightly aside, but as the fellow turned to come back he got a stinging blow in the ear: his hands dropped, and before he could guard, Salmon gave him a swinging left-handed blow on the nose which sent him stumbling face to earth.

The crowd rushed forward with roars of "Kill the dam Yanks, kill 'em!" but quicker than thought a full half dozen of the Pros stretched their lengths on the grass with blood starting from their noses, eyes and ears.

All men who go armed have a wholesome dread of a brawny fist. To get knocked down means a jar that is a headache for a week, a black eye for a month, and disgrace forever.

The crowd fell back, but the cries of "kill 'em, hang 'em, hang the Yanks" increased, as the little group of unarmed men stood backed up against the

shanty. Guns were fired in the air, and the threat to kill them might have been carried out, had not a little, light-haired man sprung out of the covered commissary wagon with a pistol in each hand. He slipped through the mob and in a twinkling stood with the Yankees.

"Keep back, gentlemen, I 'll plug the first man that touches these men! Open up there, and let them out!"

"But we have n't voted," said Jason.

"Good God, what of it! These men are drunk, I can only hold 'em off for a minute—you must go now, please go now—they will kill you all—one taste of blood and they snuff you out, go!"

The little man's pistols looked out straight in front and the crowd parted. He walked out and the Yankees followed. In a minute they were outside of the ring and a hundred feet from the polling place.

"Git, now!" shouted the little man, and he fired one of his pistols in the air.

Whether it was a case of hypnotic suggestion is not for us to say. But the Yankees, now thoroughly frightened when the worst danger was over, broke into a run. It was a race for life, although nothing worse than yells, curses, and loud laughter followed them, backed up with a few random shots. It was a complete panic —a rout.

When the five worthy Browns reached Brownsville, they were tired, worn and hungry. They went away hopeful, gay and buoyant; they returned di-

shevelled, dejected and undone. The two women came out to meet them, each carrying a baby, and sundry little Browns, sucking their thumbs, tugged at their skirts. Gracious, womanly women that they were, they smiled a greeting to their husbands and brothers.

"How I wish I could vote"—called Wealthy, "yet I know the Anti-Slaveries will win, now won't they!"

"I did n't vote—I 'm not twenty-one yet, you know!" said Salmon.

II

ONE month before the election Governor Reeder had caused a census to be taken, and the actual number of voters in the Territory was found to be 2905. At the election 6113 votes were cast; 1400 of these were Anti-Slavery. But before the news reached the Browns other exciting events had occurred.

The big man whom Salmon had so punished, proved to be one Scott Carver, or "Cap" Carver, as he was called, a man of some property and considerable influence. His ranch was just across the Missouri River, thirty-five miles east from Brownsville. The place was a general rendezvous for all the ruffians and rogues in that section.

When Captain Carver returned to his home that night after election he drove off, with the help of his friends, fourteen head of cattle that belonged to the Browns, as salve for his broken nose and wounded feelings. In the morning the Browns discovered that their choice blooded stock, brought clear from Ohio,

were gone. It was not difficult to follow the trail across the prairie. Owen and John tracked the drove straight to Cap Carver's ranch and there at sundown found the cattle mixed in a herd of several hundred others.

They demanded their property. Carver declared that he had bought the cattle in Illinois, and that he himself had never been in Kansas at all. There was a full score of men around the place, and they intimated that if the two visitors did not get back to the other side of the river and stay there, it might go hard with them. The Browns returned home and invoked the law. But the sheriff and county judge claimed that they had no jurisdiction in Missouri. It was practically a separate country and extradition was a thing entirely unheard of.

Then the Browns tried to organize a posse to go over and forcibly take possession of their own, but the difficulties of cutting out fourteen head of cattle from a herd of two hundred, and making a fight against odds, were too great for the neighbors to think of. Further than that, the Devons had probably been driven further away by this time.

So spring opened and the Brown babies had no milk, and coffee was drunk with sugar only.

Plowing was begun and crops of corn, wheat and oats planted.

The fact that the Territory had gone in favor of slavery by a big majority did not banish the sunshine and spring showers: so the grain was growing, the flowers blooming and the vegetables in the garden

were a delight to the eyes of the women. Yet the men had not forgotten that their votes had not been counted at the last election, and the thought that the same scene would probably be played over again in the fall was galling in the extreme.

In June, John, Jr. and Jason made a trip to Lawrence for supplies. Lawrence was the state capital, and while there the Browns made a plea to the Governor, asking for help in getting their cattle back. The Governor treated them with great courtesy, was very sorry indeed, he would look into the matter personally and would write Captain Carver to return the stock. The cattle must have been taken accidentally—stock were continually straying away and Captain Carver's herdsmen had only made a mistake.

The Browns saw that they had small hope from this direction, so they talked with others and talked freely. On the subject of slavery they expressed themselves plainly, and tried to get the promise from various citizens that if, at the November election, the ruffians from Missouri returned they would fight.

In fact they made a canvass of the town and got the promise of over a hundred men that they would not stand idly by and see their state overrun by a lawless element. An effort had already been made to organize militia companies, and from the encouragement they received they felt sure that the disgraceful scenes of the previous March would not be repeated.

Enthusiasm soon fans itself into a glow; it is so much pleasanter to agree with an enthusiastic man

than to dispute him, that easy converts are made.

On the way home the Browns called at every settlers' cabin and only one theme was discussed. Very little opposition was made to their plan, which was just this and nothing more: the actual settlers of Kansas must arm themselves, organize and repel any invasion that might occur on election day. Only actual residents should vote, all others must be driven out. A good bold stand, once for all, would do the business.

All they talked with agreed to this; some were a bit luke-warm; two or three had never heard that Missourians had marched over and voted illegally, was it not a mistake? But of course only residents of Kansas should vote—they promised to use their influence on the side of right.

The two men reached home with their wagon load of provisions. Besides provisions they brought gun powder and lead for melting up into bullets; and besides the powder and lead they brought glowing news of how everywhere men were arming, and of how in November a fair election would be held.

Even the women caught the enthusiasm, and at odd times the next day Jason's wife molded bullets as she sang a lullaby to her babe.

On the third night after the travellers had returned a rap was heard at the door of the long log house where John and Jason lived with their families.

"Some one is at the door," said Ellen to her husband.

"Who 's there?" called John.

"We 're movers and my wife here is sick—can't you take us in till morning?"

John got up, unbarred the door and—looked into the muzzle of a double-barreled shot gun.

"Stand still, or I 'll blow you to hell!" said a hoarse, low voice. The shot gun was held straight at his breast as four other men pushed into the house. They flashed a dark lantern on the row of bunks and threatened to kill the first person that moved.

"We won't hurt you if you 're decent, we want nothin' but your guns and ammunition," said the spokesman of the party.

John hesitated.

"Tell us quick—we want no foolin'—your wimmen won't be safe a minute if I whistle twice!"

John pointed to a chest and to the guns in the corner.

Two of the ruffians carried out the chest, and another took the guns. They then backed out of the door after threatening to kill the first person who appeared outside.

Soon there was a firing and the "phit, phit" of bullets could be heard as they struck against the house. When the firing ceased the rumble of a wagon could be heard. John shoved open the sliding window and in the bright moonlight could see a wagon and a dozen horsemen disappearing across the prairie.

Jason was up and dressed by this time. He ran across to awaken Salmon and Frederick who slept in the

shanty opposite. It was not necessary; they were already very wide awake. They had the same tale to tell as he, and Owen the same. Doubtless they had all been awakened at the same moment. Only the guns, pistols and ammunition were taken. The whole plot had been carefully planned and carried out without a hitch. All the marauders wore black masks, and they talked but little.

Jason, Frederick and Owen at once started for Lawrence to report the affair to the Governor and secure more arms. On the way they found that several other well-known settlers had been served in the same way.

The Governor received them kindly. He was very sorry to hear of how they had been treated; he would investigate the matter personally and see what could be done. He had no authority to supply them more arms: there was no precedent for such action, but of course they could buy guns if they chose.

But they had no money and no dealer would trust them.

They used their last dime to buy paper, an envelope and a postage stamp. They wrote to their father telling him of what had happened and asking him to send them arms so that they could protect themselves.

Then they hitched up their horse to the wagon and started for home.

They had been gone three days, and the tidings they brought were not inspiring. But it was nothing to what the Browns of Brownsville had to tell them.

The night they went away, every horse the brothers owned (save the one they drove) had been stolen.

III

HERE we are—packed in like pigs in a sty—we can't fight, for we have no arms "—

"But I 'll tell you what we can do!"

"What is it, then?"

"Starve!"

This one word seemed to rumble through the long low room of the log cabin like a grim spirit of evil. It put a quietus on further discussion and the group of five men and two women sat there in silence. Outside in every direction stretched the blackness of the plain over which the prairie fires had so recently run.

The sun had gone down and twilight seemed to come up out of the earth with the night dews. It was the last of September and the scudding clouds that flew southward were a fit backing for the V shaped flocks of wild geese that went screaming before the wind.

Across the little gulch that ran near came the bark of a prairie wolf, and this was soon answered by a snarl only a little way off.

"There 's no chickens here—they might as well go 'way," said one of the women who sat hand in hand with her husband in the open doorway.

"Not a feather—they took even the last duck!"

"That 's nothing to the pigs?"

"But what are pigs to cows when there are babies to feed?"

"And what are cows to horses when there is land to plow?"

"But you have a horse!"

"Surely—and nothing to feed him!"

There in one end of the room stood the patient, bony old horse, nibbling at the bark on the branches of cotton-wood that were thrown down in front of him.

"I say we have the horse," repeated the woman, disregarding the man's remark, "and we have the wagon. The wagon will hold a camping outfit, and the children and the rest of us can walk. We are only wasting time here—we must get back to God's country before the snow flies!"

"But you know father wrote us that the arms were on the way!" mildly protested her husband.

"How many times must I hear that? If they had started in July they would have been here a month ago."

"Well, if help does not show up in three days we sing the doxology and retreat—are all agreed?"

"And all get killed on the way?"

"Pshaw! you know that the ruffians want us to go. If they see we are going they will offer no objec-

tions. It is our staying here that aggravates 'em."

"Well, it 's getting chilly, let 's be extravagant and start a fire to cheer things up a bit and we will decide on something and then do it!"

A crackling fire of brush wood was made in the big, mud-chinked fire-place. The dancing gleams of light sent out strange cavorting shadows among the rafters overhead and filled the room with a peculiar luminous glow.

Ranged along the wall was a row of bunks. Piles of soft upland prairie grass, with buffalo robes laid on top, made comfortable beds. In these bunks could be seen various tow-colored heads, and the regular, deep breathing of healthy children could be heard. Tin pans and skillets hung on the wall, across one corner was a cupboard with a calico curtain before it. The only furniture in the house was a long pine table and several hickory chairs. Stretched across the rafters overhead were strings of dried pumpkin, several pieces of jerked venison, and bunches of catnip and sage.

For a hunter's camp it would have been just right. If there had been a few guns in the corner and these five men there alone, each supplied with a pipe and one with heels on a chair, playing an accordeon, the sight would have gladdened our town-weary souls.

But not one of these five men used tobacco, they had no accordeon, and worse—they had no gun. And the presence of the two women and the children and the old horse tied in the corner gave a semi-tragic setting to the scene.

They were handsome fellows, these five tall, lithe young men, handsome in the ragged raiment, and undismayed in their youthful strength.

"Go on, Jason, read the letter—we 'll imagine it has just come and that we do not know a word of what it contains."

The man addressed went to the cupboard in the corner and took out a letter that seemed soiled and worn from much handling. He read:

NORTH ELBA, N. Y., June 26, 1855.

My Dear Children:

Your last letter telling of the outrages that have been inflicted upon you by the Pro-Slavery men has been received. I showed the letter to Mr. Gerritt Smith at Syracuse and also to others who are interested in Kansas affairs. They have placed in my hands upward of four hundred dollars to be used in supplying arms whereby you can protect yourselves and your families. I have purchased forty rifles and several thousand rounds of ammunition and will start them forward without delay by two trusty messengers. One of these messengers is your brother Oliver, who, although only sixteen years old, is very handy with a rifle. The other man I have known some years and I think you can depend on him in case of an emergency.

You have settled on your land in legal manner and complied with all the requirements, and you must not be driven out simply because you prefer to have Kansas a free state. There are enough arms for yourselves and neighbors. These arms are to be used for your self protection, and should any force of men march

against you to drive off your stock, or fire your wheat fields and hay stacks, you are to fight.

Your Mother and all of the children are quite well and join me in sending love. May God bless and care for you ever, is the prayer of your father.

Yours Truly,

JOHN BROWN.

When the letter was finished there was a silence broken only by the neighing of the horse and the snoring of the children.

"If they run off our stock, we are to shoot! Oho, I see!"

"When aside from old Joe we have n't a jack rabbit to call our own."

"And all of the wheat has been burned."

"And so has the hay."

"Now read us what Vice-President David B. Atchinson said in his address to the Missourians—you have the clipping, Owen?"

"Yes, I have it, it is such pleasant reading, I did not care to throw it away."

"Read it then, we need something cheerful."

"Well, here she goes:

"'The people of Kansas in their first election will decide for themselves whether slavery shall exist there or not. Now if a set of religious fanatics and demagogues a thousand miles away wish to give their money to abolitionize Kansas, it is your duty to counteract their knavish purpose: you who live but a day's journey from the Territory. If you allow Kansas to be settled by these Puritans, they will run away your

slaves and make you continual trouble. We are men of peace, and peace we will have, by God, even if we have to fight for it. Now, Missourians, do your duty, and decide this question. If any fool abolitionist gets in the way, so much the worse for him. They have all of the North to themselves; let them know that the bowie-knife and the revolver are for the benefit of people who do not mind their own affairs.' "

The young man ceased to read and again there was a silence.

"Is that all?" asked Jason after a pause.

"It 's enough, is n't it?"

"No, give us that manifesto."

"The Missouri Governor's?"

"Yes."

"Very well, here it is:

" 'By consent of the parties, the present contest in Kansas is made the turning point in the destinies of slavery and abolitionism. If the North triumphs, abolitionism will grow more insolent and aggressive, until the utter ruin of the South is accomplished. If the South secures Kansas, she will extend slavery into all territory south of the fortieth parallel to the Rio Grande, and this of course will secure the pent up institution of slavery a proper outlet and make a market for the rapidly increasing number of slaves. It will also restore the power of the South in Congress —giving us the Legislature and Senate. But if the North secures Kansas, the power of the South will gradually diminish, and the slave population will become valueless, for there will be too many slaves to the acre, so to speak. All depends upon prompt action at the present moment.' "

"Now, folks, you know the situation—what shall we do?" said the elder of the young men.

"We have n't a gun even to kill game with, so how can we fight!"

"Then we will retreat with honor."

"Yes, with honor, 't is all we have."

"But if the messengers with arms come after we 're gone?"

"No danger, they have been captured and killed, or else turned back."

"And the postoffice—shall we make one more trip to see if there 's any word for us?"

"It 's too risky, we are threatened every time we go there, and if there were letters for us, 't is n't likely the postmaster would give them to us, anyway."

"Then we are to retreat?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"To-morrow night."

"You have heard the motion, all ready for the question—all who favor a northward retreat under cover of the darkness to-morrow night hold up their hands. Owen, Fred, Wealthy, John, Salmon, in favor, and Ellen don't vote. Women can vote here, sister Ellen, what do you say?"

"Wait three more days and three nights, and if help does not then come we will go," replied the young woman.

"Now, what do you say to the last motion?"

"What 's the use!"

"We 've already waited too long!"

"We 're nearly to the bottom of the meal barrel now!"

"Well," continued the self-appointed chairman, "whatever we do should be unanimous—Ellen has got four babies and a good level head—she has as much at stake as any of us, let 's follow her advice just this once. On the third night after this we take up the march! Are you agreed?"

Two women and four men voted a reluctant aye. The old horse in the corner pawed assent and the sleeping babies in the bunks made no protest.

IV

HEN John Brown received that letter from his sons, asking that he send them weapons, did he comply with their request and send them arms? No, he carried them arms.

Three nights had passed to the anxious watchers since they had made their resolution to depart. They had packed just what was necessary for them to take, and no more; the rest of their belongings were to be abandoned. A beacon light had been burned out on the prairie: only wolves and night birds had answered to its friendly gleams, but now on the evening of the fourth night there was a wild tumult of delight, for Oliver and the "trusty messenger" had come.

"But we hardly expected you?" said Ellen as she seated the old man in a chair and they all crowded around him.

"You only said you'd send 'a trusty messenger!'"

"And why not, pray?"

"And who is so trusty as he?" called Jason.

"Oh, that was a joke—I thought of course you would understand it."

The children crowded around their Grandfather and he held a whole armful on his knee, while several who could not reach the coveted haven of his arms begged that he would show them the inside of his silver watch, and others still demanded a bear story.

The two women busied themselves getting supper, and talked together in great good nature; the five brothers went in and out of the house carrying boxes and bundles and bags that had been brought in the one-horse spring wagon. They paused now and then listening to the jolly voice of Oliver as he stood in the wagon passing out the load. Oliver was only a boy, barely sixteen, big, strong and good natured.

"You drove from Chicago?"

"Yes, shipped the guns by boat to Chicago, there we bought the horse and wagon, loaded 'er up and made straight for Iowa; then into Nebraska and down here."

"Did any one know that you had a wagon load of guns?"

"Nary—why should they? You see the surveying instruments were sticking out behind and people took us for surveyors. We made twenty miles a day—walked all the way to make it easy for the horse—walked the whole plum thousand miles, and we have n't so much as got a blister on our heels—did you see my shot gun?"

"No, where is it?

"Under the seat there—double barreled, stub and twist. We feasted on prairie chickens the whole way. You oughter see me drop 'em on the wing."

"When did you leave Chicago?"

"Oh, two months ago. You see Father had to skirmish around for money—Sharpe's rifles cost like tarnashun! Mrs. Brydges sent him two hundred dollars, Gerritt Smith a hundred, and half a dozen other folks fifty apiece. Oh, I tell you the North is with us. Kansas is the battle ground, they say, and if we carry the Territory Anti it just means death to Slavery. That 's what Frederick Douglas says, anyway—he was at our house for a week—he 's a darkey himself and oughter know if anybody does. Carry that powder a leetle careful, Salmon—what in the mischief! you ain't taking our horse in the house, are you?"

"Well, I guess so; horses ain't safe outside, here."

"Goodness me, what nice neighbors you 've got, for sure! I must show you how to shoot a Sharpe's rifle, to-morrow!"

And all this time old John Brown sat before the fire-place with four babies on his knee and three on the floor at his feet, telling them bear stories.

It 's been quite a while since we saw him last—nearly twenty years. Time has not been o'er gentle with him, for although he is now only fifty-five years of age, he looks sixty or more. He seems thinner; his smooth-shaven face is brown and bronzed, and the strong jaw and sharp chin stand out in bony outline.

The dark blue eyes—wide set—have not lost their lustre, nor has the stiff bristling hair grown thin, but it has turned to iron grey, and the strong face is seamed and scarred by life's rough weather.

"Supper 's ready," calls Wealthy. "Here, let me take the baby!"

But the baby clings to Grandfather's neck, and Grandfather explains that he has been the father of only twenty babies of his own, and that he knows just how to take care of 'em. As the man arises we perceive that he is not so tall as either of the six sons who stand waiting for him to say grace. His shoulders droop, his neck is long and his lithe form gives him a look of height which he does not possess. He is not over five feet, ten; and his weight is under a hundred and fifty pounds, rather than over.

The burdens of life have robbed him of an inch in height; and care, with hard work and manly abstinence have made him a bundle of bone and wiry sinews. And as he sits at the table, with the baby on his lap, now and then giving the youngster a bite and talking to the chubby rogue in foolish baby prattle, your heart goes out to him as you look on his strange, sad countenance. Then you see that massive jaw and catch the gleam of those threatening eyes and you draw back—you do not understand him.

This is a disappointed man we see, that is certain. He is in perfect health and therefore not nervous, but he is restless and has a couchant look at times. The face shows disappointment: it speaks of hopes too

high for earth, ambitions unrealized and aspirations that cannot be gratified this side of the grave.

Failure had followed John Brown for twenty years with dogged steps. In Pennsylvania, wolves, bears and wildcats had thinned his pretty flocks of sheep. The dense woods were not adapted for pasturage and he soon saw that to save his sheep he must return them to the open. So with the help of the two oldest boys the herds were driven back to "the Western Reserve."

For a time the sheep prospered in Ohio and large fleeces brought fair prices; but it soon became evident that the mill owners of the East to whom the farmers of the Western Reserve sent their wool did not treat them honestly. In fact the farmers were being fleeced as well as their flocks.

They held meetings and discussed the question of what was best to do; and it was decided that if they had a responsible agent in the East to whom they could ship, that he would see that the wool was properly graded and sold for what it was worth, and the proceeds, less a fair commission, could be returned to them: but who should go?

There seemed to be only one man who had the confidence of the wool growers in all that section of country, and that was John Brown. Many people did not like him, they thought him stubborn and fanatical, but he knew how to grade wool, he had some education and he was honest. No one ever doubted his integrity and even his open enemies would have trusted him.

So he sold out his herds and went to Springfield, Mass., to act as agent for the wool growers. But the mill owners did not like John Brown. When they bought wool of him and asked him to put No. 2 wool in No. 1 sacks and label it No. 1, shipping it to certain places for them, he perversely declined to do it. They could not manipulate him, and they soon invented a plan by which they could do without him. They sent agents of their own straight to Brown's clients in Ohio and they represented that John Brown was paying a deal more attention to educating Negroes than to selling wool. More than this, he had actually secreted runaway slaves in his warehouse; and on one occasion when officers were close upon the track of a fugitive, the black man had been sewn up in a sack of wool and shipped off by freight.

The worst about these accusations were that they were founded on fact; and so plausibly was the plea put forth that John Brown was not trustworthy, that these farmers—ever suspicious—ceased to have faith in him, and sold their wool to these wily agents who paid such good prices for it.

In short, the mill owners set about to ruin Brown's business, and they succeeded. They had no hazy ventures on hand for assisting fugitives, and were guiltless of any attempt to educate either white or black folks; they attended strictly to their own affairs, and against them Brown with his limited capital, and divided mind, could not compete.

But the restless years had brought Brown into ac-

quaintanceship with some strong men. Abolition instincts took him to Boston occasionally, and there he met a young man by the name of F. B. Sanborn who presented him to Theodore Parker, Wendell Phillips and Dr. Cabot.

Gerritt Smith had been introduced to him by letter from Mrs. Brydges, and when it became certain that he would have to give up his business at Springfield, Smith offered to turn over to him a large tract of land in the Adirondack Mountains to be parceled out to colored men. And Brown's business was to show these refugees how to farm and to teach them in various ways.

Very gladly did Brown accept the offer. He moved to North Elba, N. Y., and the old pioneer life that he knew so well was again taken up. There were many discouragements, for the ignorant blacks, used to the soft ways of the cities where they had acted as coachmen, barbers and house servants, could not quickly adapt themselves to the rough out-door life of the mountains, and very often they left their would-be-helper and returned to voluntary bondage.

John, Jr., Jason and Owen had moved back to the Western Reserve and were engaged in farming and stock raising. Part of the time their father was with them, and part of the time he was at North Elba.

And all these years Margaret Brydges held fast to her one idea that the slaves must be made free. She had not only used the income from her fortune, but had encroached on the principal. Her house was a

refuge and a school, and Ruth Crosby was her faithful friend and coadjutor. But never once in all these years had John Brown and Margaret met. Letters had passed constantly, for the business of the underground railway demanded it; and once when Brown proposed making a visit to Cincinnati in order that certain details of the campaign be personally discussed, Margaret had written suggesting that the matter could be better arranged by correspondence.

So the years went hurrying by—years of constant endeavor, contracting finances, of disappointment, of sorrow and of defeat.

But the battle for principle ever has its compensation, and the bonds of friendship that held these faithful workers in freedom's cause was of a kind unsullied by any selfish taint. It was a friendship noble and sincere: and the weekly letter from Margaret Brydges to John Brown was to him a consolation and a solace for all the ills and stings of fortune.

As we have already seen, five of John Brown's sons had followed the tide of emigration to Kansas. Difficulty had come to them; they had written to their old poverty-stricken father at North Elba for help. He was poorer than they, yet he had friends who believed in him, and the friends one makes in adversity can always be relied upon.

He made six copies of that appeal from his sons, and sent these six copies to six friends. It was not long before he had arms for fifty men and over a thousand dollars in cash.

Leaving his wife and family of five children at North Elba, he took Oliver, his oldest boy then at home, and started for Kansas.

And now we see him at his destination seated at the supper table with the baby on his knee.

"And so you have no cattle at all?" mused the old man.

"Not a horn!" answered Jason.

"And no horses, I believe you said?"

"Not a hoof, save that one old horse there?"

"And you are quite sure that this Carver you have been telling me of is the man who ran them off!"

"Yes, we are sure of it."

"Ah, well, I will go and see Captain Carver to-morrow."

V

WHENEVER two men meet for the first time there is always a swift, unspoken understanding, and one acknowledges the other master.

Captain Carver was large, stout, good natured, glib of tongue, sociable and ready. But now his wit did not seem to fit, his jokes fell flat and his loud, easy ways were out of keeping. He sat on the porch and tilted nervously on one leg of the chair: "So you are from York State, be you?"

"Yes," said the visitor.

"What part o' York State?"

"The northern."

"Been here long? 'scuse my askin'."

"I have just arrived. I came purposely to see you."

Then there was a pause. Captain Carver coughed, spat, removed a big chew of tobacco and replaced it with a larger one. He handed the pouch of tobacco towards the visitor, who refused it with a half smile of disgust.

"Hem—ah—a' purpose to see me?"

"Yes."

"And where hev I saw you before—your face is familiar!"

"You never saw me before."

"And you said, I b'lieve, that you did not care to —to talk about your errand till after dinner."

"That is what I said."

"Wall, the horn has blowed, less go in."

The visitor was a smooth shaven, elderly man. He wore a seedy suit of black and a black stock. He carried a cotton umbrella and about his neck was a black tape fastened to a silver watch.

Captain Carver felt strangely uneasy in the presence of this self-contained stranger: he would like to have throttled him on the spot; he half believed the visitor was a preacher, so he dare not swear; his language had to be curtailed and was awkward in the extreme. After dinner the guest and host again moved out on the veranda.

"Stranger, you are a perfect gent, but your manner is dam queer—is peculiar, that is, see? no 'fense. Now tell me what you want!"

"Have you a room where we can talk together by ourselves?"

"'T ain't necessary, is it?"

"Yes."

Carver now evidently thought he had a lunatic to deal with and deemed it best to humor him. He led the way into a little musty parlor and threw open the

window. The visitor followed and closed the door.

"My name is Brown. Five of my sons live across the line in Kansas, and as you drove away their cattle, I have come to see about getting them back."

"Who drove away their cattle?"

"You."

"It 's a lie."

"Sit down, please, we had better be calm about this matter."

"Did you say I stole those cattle?"

"Yes."

"If you was n't an old man, I 'd kill you."

"You need not mind my age! sit down and I will tell you what I want."

Carver sat down, trembling visibly, and very much at a disadvantage in parleying with John Brown.

"Now, you took fourteen head of cattle and twelve head of horses belonging to my sons"—

"You are a liar, and a sneaking, miserable Yankee lawyer—I see through you—now, I 'll give you five minutes to climb out o' here!"

"But I 'm not going!"

"Then I 'll kill you."

"That will prevent my being back on the other side of the river at three o'clock!"

"What of it, old Yank?"

"Why, if I 'm not back there at three o'clock, my men will come across and hang you!"

"Ha, ha, hang me, will they! why I 've full twenty men about this ranch, all armed!"

"And if you had twice twenty, my posse could scatter them all, release every slave you have, burn your buildings and hang you beside, all before sundown."

"You say you have to git back by three o'clock?"

"Yes."

"Wall, go now!"

"Will you return those cattle and horses you took?"

"Old man, let 's be decent now—'fore God, I 've took no stock from no one."

"But you have thousands of acres of land here. You have hundreds of cattle in these valleys and hills and you have whole herds of horses. It will be no hardship for you to return this stock!"

"Wall now, Brown—it 's jest possible—jest barely possible that some o' your stock got accidentally mixed with ourn—now if you air sure of it, dead sure, why, as an honest man, I 'm bound to return 'em. Does that satisfy you?"

"That is satisfactory."

"Wall, shake then."

So they shook hands. And the free and easy banter of Captain Carver came back.

The two men walked out on the veranda, and the Captain said he supposed there was no need of offering Mr. Brown whiskey and Mister Brown said there was no need. Then Captain Carver called to a colored man who was working in the yard and ordered him to saddle a couple of horses.

"You see, Parson Brown, your stock is all mixed

in and scattered hell-west and crooked ways, so you 'll jest have to pick out what 's handy. Is that all right?"

"Yes, that 's all right."

"Now you air a perfect gent—it 's a pleasure to do business with a man like you—we 've all got to give and take a little in this world. Am I right, Elder Brown?"

"Yes, you are surely right."

They mounted the horses and rode up the valley for two or three miles, followed by three Negro boys on mustangs. Brown picked out fourteen head of cattle and twelve horses, and the boys were ordered to cut the stock out from the herd and corral them.

"You 've got to git back by three, I b'lieve," said the Captain with a forced smile.

"Yes."

"I would n't have you miss it for a good deal—now, Brown, you really did not think you scared me?"

"No, you are a man not easily frightened!"

"Right you air—put 'er thar."

They shook hands as their horses trotted along side by side.

"And the stock—will you come for 'em?"

"I would like for you to deliver the horses and cattle at the grove across the river to-morrow morning at eight o'clock."

"Wall, for old 'quaintance sake, I 'll do it—to-morrow at eight?"

"Yes."

By this time they were back to the house. They

dismounted, again shook hands, and the old man took his umbrella and departed; promising on the other's request to call when he happened out that way.

The next morning at eight o'clock Owen and Jason found the fourteen head of cattle and the twelve horses at the grove, all exactly as promised.

VI

THERE was a great jubilee when the cattle and horses came trooping back to Brownsville. To be sure, the cattle were not quite so good as the ones that had been lost, but the horses were better. These were all unbroken steeds and there was quite a time taming them, but this only served for sport to the hardy young men.

Plowing was begun at once for fall wheat. Seed and implements and provisions had to be bought, so two of the brothers started for Lawrence each duly armed with a Sharpe's rifle, two pistols and a dirk. The father insisted that these arms should be carried in plain view "for the moral effect."

The young men were everywhere treated with great respect, and the storekeepers of Lawrence welcomed them as old friends as soon as they saw that there was money to pay for all their purchases.

A corral was built of strong poles and every night the stock was driven in and a man placed on watch;

a double bar was placed on the door and loop holes arranged in the house, that commanded every direction. But no one came near to molest them.

Politically the Territory was in the hands of the Pro-Slavery men, for the March election had placed them in power. And wherever the authorities were called upon to decide disputes between two men, if one happened to be a Free-state man, he surely got the worst of it. The threat was continually being made that the Territory would soon be so hot that no Abolitionist could stay there. Several Free-state men had been arrested on the charge of attending Abolitionist meetings, this act having been made a crime by the bogus legislature. These men had been flogged and ordered to leave the Territory at once, and a good many had complied. It is a noteworthy fact however, that the men who were thus molested were inoffensive individuals and were always taken at a disadvantage. Life is sweet and the Missourians who made up the Sheriff's posse did not care to run up against men who might kill.

Hearing of these arrests that were being made near him, John Brown wrote a letter to Sheriff Jones who lived at Westport, Missouri—where he was also Postmaster—stating that the writer had attended Abolition meetings at Osawatomie and if his act was against the law, the Sheriff was invited to come out and arrest him.

To this letter, the Sheriff, with a fine sense of humor, replied that if Brown considered himself guilty of

breaking the laws he had better come in and give himself up. The Sheriff then added a P. S. to the effect that he had his eye on the Browns and would look after their case later.

Within a week after this Jason was out on the prairie only a mile from home and was fired at by some one secreted in the tall slough grass. The bullet passed through his hat, and he dropped to the ground, which act probably saved his life, for had he started to run, other shots would probably have been fired.

That same day three other Anti-Slavery men in the neighborhood had been fired on. Two of these men had been killed outright by the unseen foes, but the third man, Charles Dow by name, who was at work in a field, started to run for his wagon which was near. In this wagon was a Sharpe's rifle, and the assailants doubtless knew the fact; and they knew further that if Dow got that rifle in his hands, he would at once go gunning for them.

So out of a gully arose one Franklin Coleman, a well-known Pro-Slavery bully, and he ran with gun in hand to head off Dow. It was a race for life. They were approaching the wagon from nearly opposite directions, but seeing that Dow would reach the wagon first, Coleman raised his shot gun and from only fifty feet away, sent a charge of slugs full into the breast of young Dow, who fell dead without a groan.

From a hillock a hundred yards away, Dow's partner, Jacob Branson, witnessed the entire affair.

Dow and Branson lived together, and their house

was about twelve miles southwest of Brownsville. It was ten o'clock that night before news of the murder reached the Browns, and then only accidentally, by a herdsman who was out looking for stray cattle.

Dow had been a universal favorite among the Anti-Slavery men. He was a young man—barely twenty. He was frank, generous and good-natured to a fault, and his death came to the Browns as a personal sorrow.

"And where is Branson?" asked John Brown of the man who brought the news.

"Why, at home, I s'pose."

"Alone?"

"No, his wife and children are there."

"No one else?"

"No one but the dead man. Branson and his wife carried the corpse to the house, and I saw it there two hours ago, all laid out in his Sunday clothes."

"And you left Branson and his wife there alone?"

"Yes, they are going to bury Dow's body to-morrow."

"But they will never do it."

"Why?"

"Branson himself will be dead."

"What makes you say so?"

"He witnessed this murder—he saw Coleman do the deed, and the murderers cannot afford to let him live. Another thing, the shooting to-day shows that there is an organized effort to drive us out. If we go to Branson's, we may be in time to save him."

"For his wife s sake, go at once!" exclaimed Ellen.

"And leave you here?" asked Jason.

"We can fight," said Ellen, "we will bar the door, and have a rifle at every port-hole."

"No, Jason and John must stay with you and the children—no doubt there are enemies around the house now, watching our movements—the rest of us will go—boys, saddle the horses!"

The ranchman who had brought the news suddenly forgot his stray stock and was in for the adventure.

In ten minutes' time the six horsemen, each heavily armed, were riding at a smart trot in the direction of Branson's ranch.

It was the twenty-first of November and the night was dark and cold; a slight drizzling rain was falling. An hour had passed and they were nearing the house. Twinkling lights were seen and soon pistol shots could be heard echoing like small cannon across the silent night.

The men dismounted and leaving the six horses in charge of Oliver, they separated, twenty feet apart, and walked briskly forward.

On approaching the house they found it surrounded by a guerdon of mounted men, a full score in number. Salmon cocked his gun and drew a bead on a horseman who stood out against the sky, not fifty yards away. In a whisper he begged his father for permission to shoot, but he was ordered to put down his gun. Then he wanted to kill the horse—it would create a panic! But no, John Brown would not have it.

The five men withdrew into a thicket to consult.

"Let each one of us pick his man—that will drop five of them, and the rest will likely scamper. Then as they run we can get a few more—it 's the only way," said Owen.

"No, if we shoot, they will kill Branson. It 's barely possible they only want to arrest him, and scare him thoroughly, then order him out of the country," said Frederick.

"I think Fred is right," said the father. "We must shed no blood unless it is positively necessary. If they are taking Branson away we will rescue him, and we may get him away alive, but if we begin to shoot now we spoil our one chance of saving him!"

"Fall in!" came a clear, ringing voice from the house a quarter of a mile away.

The clouds went hurrying across the sky and for an instant the moon shone through a rift. The horsemen had broken their circle and were coming down the slope from the house in a bunch. Their horses were walking, and there was no disorder or hilarity in their movements. This absence of drunkenness convinced old man Brown that it was a Sheriff's posse, acting under the leadership of a cool head.

"Lay low, boys, cock your guns, and under no conditions shoot until they do. At the first sign they give of fight, pour in the lead on 'em and kill as many as you can!"

The place where they crouched was a hazel patch not ten feet from the roadway, that was here lined on

both sides by the low bushes. The approaching horsemen were only a hundred yards away—seventy-five—fifty—

Old man Brown had left his rifle in the bushes and crawled out and lay flat down in the road.

As the grey horse of the leader of the party was almost upon him he arose like a shadow and called: "Halt!"

The horses evidently knew the word, for they halted with a jerk, and the grey horse shied as his master attempted to draw a pistol.

"The first man who raises a gun dies—my men are lying all about here with cocked rifles drawn on you!"

"What do you want, anyway?" civilly asked the leader of the party who had now gotten his horse back into the road.

"Who are you?" asked Brown.

"Me? I 'm Sheriff Jones on official business, and neighbor, I 'll tell you, you are doing a mighty serious thing in stopping me—please step aside and let us pass."

"No sir, I do not let you pass"—

"Well, this is funny," laughed the Sheriff, "but what do you want? are you crazy, or a beggar or what! What the devil are you doing out at this time of night, anyway?"

"I am not alone—my men can kill every one of you in ten seconds if I give the word—here, Salmon, hold your rifle on Mr. Jones, and move out in the road!"

A tall form arose and the moon sent a gleam of light across the gun barrel that was pointed straight at the breast of Jones.

"Don't shoot! don't shoot!" pleaded Jones in a trembling voice.

"Now where is Branson?" demanded John Brown.

"Here I am," came a voice from the center of the group of horsemen.

"Ride forward, Branson."

"I can't—I 'm tied and a man is leading my mule."

"For Christ sake, back there, turn that mule loose and give the damn brute a kick to send it forward, I am looking down a gun," groaned Sheriff Jones.

There was a push, a kick, a gee-up, a damn, and forward came the mule.

"Hold your rifle on Jones, Salmon, and bore him through the heart if a man in the line makes a move."

Brown took hold of the lariat that was around the mule's neck and led the animal into the bushes.

"Hold your bead on him, Salmon! steady, boys, don't shoot unless they try it first! Now, Jones! Forward-d-d m-m-march!!"

The posse moved forward as one rider. The horses began to trot,—then galloped and soon the sounds that came back on the night-wind told that they had broken into a furious run. Old man Brown put his ear to the ground—the fast receding hoof beats were a mile away.

VII

TWO men went back to bring up the horses, and they found Oliver full of taunt because the Sheriff's posse were allowed to escape whole.

Branson's feet had been tied under the mule's belly, and his hands fastened behind his back. The thongs were quickly cut, and the party returned to the house, where the man's wife was found lying on the floor in her night clothes in a dead faint, the four little children frantic with fear. When the woman recovered her senses and found her husband alive, he seemed to her like one raised from the dead.

Owen's bachelor experiences had made him an expert cook, and putting on an apron he proceeded to do the honors as hostess. A good fire was soon crackling in the fire-place, and ere long bacon was sizzling in a spider and the coffee pot sputtering.

Salmon set the table and the sly antics that he and Owen indulged in set the hysterical Mrs. Branson into a laughing fit; the children looked on with big,

open, wondering eyes, while Mr. Branson forgot the deep red marks about his wrists and smilingly begged everybody "to make themselves to hum."

When this midnight dinner was ready, John Brown offered a solemn prayer, and all sat down. They ate with zest, and the young men were inclined to joke and tell stories: for we never are so gay as after work well done. The sudden change from direst calamity to security also had a peculiar stimulating effect on the man and his wife: gratitude to their rescuers and joy for their deliverance filled their hearts: they thought not of the morrow.

Bill, the ranchman, made awkward jokes and imitated the pleading voice of Sheriff Jones when he begged, "Don't shoot! don't shoot!"

The meal being over the hilarious Bill picked up an accordeon and proceeded to do a double shuffle; his clinking spurs on the sanded floor and the squeaky accordeon making music that was not classic but merry withal.

Old man Brown arose and threw open a door that led into an adjoining room. The room was dark, but the clouds having drifted away, the moon was shining full and free through the open window. The pale rays fell on the calm, white face of Charles Dow. There he lay, robed in his Sunday suit of solemn black, the stiff hands folded across the breast, where the cold lead of hate had gone home. The music stopped, the dancing ceased, and the dancer gasped, "My God! I forgot."

"I think we 'd better go," said the old man.

"But you will not leave us—don't, oh, please don't!" cried the woman.

"No, you must go, too! Branson, hitch your team to the lumber wagon, you must all go with us. They will be back for you, and there will yet be blood shed—the trouble has just begun. Don't stare so at me, Branson, go hitch up that team—help him, Oliver; you too, Fred."

The cover of the plain pine box was screwed down and the coffin carried out and placed in the wagon.

The strong arms carried the children out, the fire was banked, the lights put out, and the ten-mile march across the prairie begun.

It lacked an hour of daylight when Brownsville was reached.

The watchers were rejoiced to get their own back safe and sound—rejoiced, too, to think that they had accomplished their errand and rescued the imperiled Branson without bloodshed. Even that the dead had been made safe from insult, and brought away to be given a decent burial, was a cause for congratulation.

After the news had been given, and the first greetings were over, the old man sought to repress the excess of exultation.

"But how we made them scamper," said Salmon.

"Gently, my son! The issue is greater than any of you think, and before peace comes, Kansas, if not the entire country, will be baptized with blood!"

"What 's that?"

"Why, look you, my children, all of you! what have we done to-night? We have resisted the power of the State—we have resisted Authority! For the moment, through strategy, we have achieved a small victory, but when men resist the law of the land and appeal to a Higher Law, they must fight, aye, must fling away their lives if necessary. Will you do that?"

"We will! we will!!"

The answer came back clear and strong. Enthusiasm was in the air.

"Yes, my children—it is well that you should realize the situation. The entire country—the world is now looking to Kansas! Shall slavery exist or shall it not? Kansas must decide. If we make this a free state there will not be a slave in the United States in five years from to-day. If we are defeated and Kansas remains as it is—a slave State—the question will sleep for a hundred years. We are doing God's work, and if we falter now, all the efforts of all men and women who have worked fifty years for emancipation will go for naught! The whole question is focused right here and it is for us to deal with! The time is ripe—we have struck the first blow, and now we must fight!"

The old man was standing—his voice was raised—his eyes flashed fire: "We must fight!" he repeated.

"But they have gone—Can't we go back to our work and live in peace," asked Mrs. Branson.

"No, we have only frightened a dozen men, and that just for a moment. They started to take your

husband and they will do it yet if they can. We have only angered them, and I doubt not at this moment a force of two hundred men is being collected to take him, and also to arrest us who rescued him. This force will be here within twenty-four hours and we must get in all the Anti-Slavery neighbors and stand by Branson though blood flows like water!"

There was no time for further talk. A horseman dashed in to give information that Branson's house and barn were burning "and the whole family probably murdered."

"Not exactly murdered—here we are, all safe!" remarked Branson, appearing at the door.

"Thank God, but your house and barn have all gone in smoke."

"And not mine alone, evidently!"

Across the prairie in various directions could be seen the dull reflections of fires.

"You see," continued the messenger, "I've never had anything to say on this slavery matter, and the Pro's think I'm with 'em because I'm from Tennessee. Sheriff Jones and a posse came to my house last night and said they had been attacked by a hundred Yanks and a prisoner taken away from them after a hard fight. They insisted that I go with 'em and rouse all the Pro's in the country; so they sent me and two other fellows off in one direction and I slipped off here to you; messengers have been sent to Missouri for help and they are going to drive all the Free State men out of the Territory, once for all."

Old John Brown took this man's excited statements with a grain of salt. He knew full well that Sheriff Jones would organize a larger posse and would also call on the "Kansas Militia" to help him if necessary. This "Kansas Militia" was made up of Pro-Slavery men who lived in Kansas and all the Missourians that could be mustered. The arms and ammunition were supplied at the expense of the Territory—this by order of Governor Shannon who had recently been appointed.

It was now daylight and three of the young men went out to the little grove near by to dig a grave. The women were busy preparing breakfast, and as they worked the old man sat out on a log and sketched with a pencil the words: "C. Dow—aged 20. Murdered, Nov. 21, 1855," on a rough oak slab and began carving them out with a jackknife. And as he bent over the slab his mind was busy, and these were his thoughts:

"It will not do to secrete this man Branson—he must be brought out boldly—every one must know that he is in my keeping. The Pros must be invited to take him if they can, and those who wish to enroll themselves on the Lord's side will now have an opportunity to do so! I'll take the man to Lawrence so every one will understand—this whole affair must now be conducted in daylight and the people must know where we are on this issue. We stand or fall!"

In two hours after this, the pine box containing the body of Charles Dow was carried to its last rest-

ing place in the little grove. The old man read a chapter from the Bible, a solemn hymn was sung, a prayer was said, the grave was filled up, mounded and the oaken slab placed at the head.

The little company returned to the house and began carefully testing their fire arms.

All of the young men were anxious to take part in the impending fight, and in order to decide who should stay and protect the women and children, lots were cast. Owen and Jason were destined to stay behind and they accepted their lot with rather wry faces.

A week's provisions were packed in one of the wagons and the men, all heavily armed, mounted on horseback, moved away across the cheerless plain. They zigzagged this way and that so as to stop at as many houses as possible. At each place, regardless of whether the settler was a Southron or a Free State man, there was told the brief story of the murder of Dow, the arrest of Branson and the fact of his rescue. And so they moved on, gathering force as they travelled, and when Lawrence was reached, fully a hundred men guarded the frightened Branson.

The Pro-Slavery capital had been moved from Lawrence to Lecompton, on account of Lawrence being made up largely of Free State men. There was a rivalry between the two towns, and during the night previous to the advent of the Browns, word had been brought that a plan was on foot to march a force against the town of Lawrence and "wipe it off the face of the earth." This was principally on account

of a newspaper published at Lawrence, called the "Herald of Freedom." The people were thoroughly frightened, the stores all closed and barricaded, and the hundred and fifty men who made up the town were in doubt whether to fly, fight or make peace with their enemies by agreeing to cease all Anti-Slavery agitation.

The first effect of the advent of John Brown's company was one of great rejoicing—here was a body of men who could and would protect them. But the enthusiasm soon turned to sorrow, and men came to Brown urging him to withdraw at once and take Branson with him, for their presence would surely bring down a mob on the place that would work mad ruin—a drunken, howling mob that would spare neither man, woman nor child.

But old man Brown concluded he would stay. He practically took possession of the place. He called up the young editor, Holcomb by name, who had brought the town into disrepute and ordered him to get out the "hottest Abolition issue that ever was printed;" and the young editor cheerfully began working paste-pot, shears and pen to that end. All people who did not believe in the Free-State issue were asked to leave. None left, but two men who had made speeches from the hotel veranda, disaffecting the people, were drummed out of town.

Breastworks were thrown up on all sides, cattle driven inside and preparations made to withstand a siege. The Pro-Slavery men began to arrive, but they

did not attempt to enter town. They came over the Missouri line on foot, in wagons, on horses and mules. They were armed with shot guns, squirrel rifles, pitchforks, knives and clubs. Evidently they had whiskey, and to spare, for they were noisy in the extreme, but always kept out of range of the Sharpe's rifles at the breastworks. This mob was made up of fully two thousand men, and they formed a circle completely around the town, where two hundred and fifty determined men were corralled.

The officers of the besieging party could not bring their half-drunken men up to the sticking point where they would charge. A charge meant sure and certain death, to a number, at least. The place could only be taken by a determined assault, and as the Missourians would not charge, and to starve the town out might take weeks, or even months, they adopted another scheme.

A messenger was sent into town under flag of truce with a letter from Sheriff Jones, who now signed himself "General." This letter was to the effect that if Branson and the editor of the seditious newspaper were immediately surrended, that amnesty would be granted to all others and the besieging force withdrawn. But if these "liberal conditions" were not accepted, one-half of the besieging army would remain and the other would proceed to burn and destroy all property belonging to Free State men in Kansas and the welfare of the wives and children of all Abolitionists could not be vouched for. With this

letter was a personal letter from Gov. Shannon to Brown, urging him to accept the terms, as the men could not much longer be restrained.

It was a terrible threat; many of these men penned up there in Lawrence had left their families unprotected, and now a fate might befall them worse than death.

Brown thought of the three women and his own grandchildren out there on the prairie. To be sure, two brave men guarded them, but at night hay could easily be piled against the house and the place fired.

He read the terms of capitulation the second time. He read the threat, and then he wrote a civil letter asking for a personal interview with Governor Shannon.

VIII

GOVERNOR Shannon was a slave owner and in outspoken sympathy with all things Southern. He was a lawyer by profession, a stump orator of no mean repute and as unscrupulous a politician as ever wormed himself into office. But the natural cleverness of the man had suffered a partial eclipse through "excessive use of stimulants," as the Life Insurance Companies would say. Yet the tone of authority was in his voice and it was plain that he expected his wishes to be carried out. For when soft diplomacy failed he resorted to a bulldozing manner that had made him a power in the court room, where he not only ruled the jury but often dictated to the judge.

Fully believing that the Yankee forces were ready to give up, he was anxious to go in and add to his laurels by receiving their surrender. Of course an insignificant force of less than three hundred could not successfully fight two thousand! yet there might be bloodshed, and to avert this and win without the shot

of a gun would be a victory that the entire world must needs applaud.

So reasoned Governor Shannon. He put on a clean white shirt and a high starched collar; he stroked his high white hat until the fur shone like mica in the clear sunshine; his long, black broadcloth was caught at the waist by a single button, and with one hand thrust into his waistcoat and the other holding a gold-headed cane, he came jauntily across the prairie, followed by a single small Negro tightly dressed in blue, with rows on rows of brass buttons.

Like Goliath he strode forward in full sight of both armies. But unlike Goliath, Governor Shannon was a gentleman—a perfect gentleman. He proposed to show the Pro-Slavery men that "personal presence" was more than a shot gun, and he would teach the Yankees that a true Southern Gentleman was neither a coward nor a ruffian.

Old man Brown in rusty jeans stood out on a rampart ready to receive His Excellency. His Excellency made a sign that Brown should approach: he did so and out on the plain before the eyes of all they shook hands.

"You are in charge, I believe, of the—the rebel forces!"

"Yes, I am in charge."

"And your name?"

"Brown."

"Ah, now friend Brown—or Captain Brown, should I say?—Captain Brown, of course you see the futility

of holding out longer. I am glad you are so sensible —we must not shed blood, and you see I have been very patient in not allowing my troops to rush in and overpower you. But now you surrender with honor, shall we conclude the arrangements right here in the presence of both armies?"

"I think, Your Excellency, we had better arrange matters in the privacy of a room where just you and I will be together—we have no writing material here!"

"Very well, I am glad you are not inclined to be quarrelsome!"

The Governor patronizingly took the arm of the old man and they walked up over the earthworks and along the main street of the village. The Governor bowed to right and left as they walked, lifting his hat to the staring women who stood with babies in their arms looking on in astonishment.

The two men reached the hotel, walked up the steps and Brown led the way into a room that had been prepared. The little brass-buttoned nigger, unconscious representative of all the trouble, remained in the hallway. When the two men reached the room, the Governor removed his hat, set his cane in a corner and sat down at the table where pens and paper were spread out. He began writing and for a minute nothing was heard but the rapid scratching of a pen as it ran in great attorney scratches across, again and again across the paper.

"What are you writing?" asked Brown after near a page of foolscap had been covered.

"Don't interrupt me, man—your terms of surrender, of course!"

And scratch, scratch, scratch went the lawyer's pen.

"Had n't we better agree on terms first?"

"I thought we had!"

"Why did you think so?"

"I told you the terms and you made no objection to them—there is an extra item I intend to put in, though!"

"What is it?"

"That every Yankee in Kansas sign an agreement not to discuss slavery in any way, nor interfere, either by word or act, with the institution."

"And you know all the Yankees?"

"I have a list here in my pocket of every Abolitionist in Kansas—this is a Slave state, and people who will not conform to our laws, will be gently placed over the border—if nothing worse!"

"And beside this—"

"You must surrender Holcomb, the editor, and Branson, the murderer."

"The murderer?"

"Yes, he killed his partner, Charles Dow. My Sheriff arrested Branson, and you rescued him—but I will pardon you provided you promptly give the men up, and agree to leave the state, or give up all Abolition agitation."

Scratch, scratch, scratch went the pen.

"But suppose I reject your terms!"

"You will not be so foolish."

"Why?"

"Because if you do not accept my terms, one-half of this army that now surrounds you will go burn your barns, ravish your women and kill your children; the other half will stay here and hold you captive."

"Governor Shannon!"

The Governor ceased writing with a start and looked up.

"Governor Shannon, I refuse your terms."

"Very well, then I will go back and tell my men that you refuse to accept pardon."

"No, you do not leave this room!"

Brown stepped to a bureau, opened a drawer and took out a long navy revolver. Shannon sank back into his chair, his teeth chattering with fear.

"What—what—what you doing—don't you know I am here under a flag of truce, that I 'm Governor of Kansas! Have you forgotten all rules of war?"

"Yes, Mister Shannon, I have forgotten all rules of war—when the Governor of Kansas talks of allowing a mob of ruffians to ravish women and kill children, I forget all rules of warfare, and only intend to shoot you through the head with this pistol."

The click-click of the cocking pistol echoed through the silence.

"Hold on, for God's sake, you would not murder me?"

"Yes, I will kill you as I would kill a snake! Order your entire mob to go to their homes, or I will kill you, as sure as I stand here!"

"But they will not go!"

"Throw those sheets you have written, on the floor, and write as I dictate."

The sheets were crumpled into balls, tossed aside, and Governor Shannon, at the dictation of John Brown, wrote this message:

LAWRENCE, Nov. 23rd, 1855.

To General Jones,
Commanding:

Terms of peace fully agreed on. Order every Missourian and every man in your command, to at once return home. Under no conditions must the property of Free State men be interfered with.

SHANNON,
Governor.

Scratch, scratch, scratch went the pen—the message was duly directed, the small, buttoned Negro was called in and told to run with it straight to General Jones. Two men were called in and ordered by John Brown to hold Governor Shannon prisoner.

Old man Brown went down and stood on the earthworks, watching the colored youth carrying the message across to the camp of the enemy. He saw the boy disappear among the tents and wagons.

In five minutes there was a great shout and the whole camp was astir.

"The damn Yanks have accepted our terms—and we are off for home!" arose the shouts. The camp was breaking up, and in half an hour, the Missourians were streaming across towards the East—straight for

home, glad that the war was over and that their skins were whole. It was cold and uncomfortable out there, anyway.

"Hurrah for Shannon! hip—hip—hurrah, hip—hip—hurrah, hip—hip—hurrah!!"

But Shannon was still a prisoner. He signed an agreement to recognize all Abolition military companies as Kansas Militia, and he further commissioned "J. Brown" as Captain. He also issued an order to Sheriff Jones, not to interfere with Branson, Holcomb, or any Free State man, on account of any offense that they were supposed to have committed.

A message was sent out with word that Governor Shannon wished to see Sheriff Jones. The Sheriff came in with a single deputy—all of his other force having departed; but the Sheriff felt fully able to manage Branson and Holcomb, provided that the Yanks did not interfere—and of course they would not, now that they had surrendered.

Sheriff Jones decided he would just handcuff Branson and Holcomb together, and march them off to the jail at Lecompton. He entered the hotel swinging the bracelets.

The Governor met him in the hallway and handed him his written orders. Jones read the order with staring eyes and said:

"What in hell is this!"

"Don't swear at me, Jones, God damn you, have you no respect for the Governor of Kansas—I've pardoned the men, that's what I have done, and no

sneaking cur by the name of Jones can dictate to me—Let 's have a drink ! "

So they adjourned to the bar-room. But Governor Shannon's gubernatorial dignity did not allow him to make a confidante of a common sheriff—the secrets of state were locked up in his own breast.

In the presence of Jones he shook hands with old Brown, warning him that in future he must go a little slow, or he would not get off so easy—in fact he could not promise Executive clemency for any further offenses.

And then Jones was sent out to hire a livery rig, and he and the Governor rode out across the prairie —across the prairie to Lecompton.

Still this did not end the matter.

IX

AND so peace, white-winged peace settled down: a fall of snow came and covered the prairies. The settlers busied themselves getting in wood from the groves that lined the ravines; they builded houses and barns and made ready for the next year's planting.

The Browns had not much to live on now—their cash was entirely gone, but the long slough grass concealed numerous rabbits and prairie chickens, and occasionally a deer was shot. Old John Brown was now known as Captain Brown, and he showed himself a captain in carpentry and house building, as well as in fighting the Lord's battles. Whenever new settlers, for ten miles around, needed assistance, he went with two or three of his sons and helped in the building and making all secure against the weather.

Nothing was paid for such service, it was only the neighborly act of man to man, and the kindness that always shows itself where population is sparse and poverty pinches.

Owen and Jason went to Osawotomie and got work by the day, ditching and bridge building, and this served to get the wherewithal for sundry sacks of meal and beans and sides of salt pork, that were carried on horseback across the prairie to Brownsville.

And so the winter passed in peace, and the V shaped flocks of wild geese began to come "yonking" from the south. The ice broke up in the creeks, and little rivulets ran down the gentle slopes, filling the ponds where the wild ducks hovered. On the hillocks the prairie chickens drummed and strutted; from the hazel patches came the whistle of "Bob White," calling for his mate, and great flocks of plover swirled through the sunshine. Sand-hill cranes—blue and white—marshaled their forces out on the sun-kissed plain, placing sentinels that watched intently for any approaching foe.

But with the cranes and the geese, came other imigrants—dozens of white covered wagons from the north and east bringing Free State men and their families to people this Garden of the World. And this sight gladdened the heart of Captain Brown—it meant Abolition votes at the next November election. To this election Brown pinned his hopes: if the actual settlers of Kansas could be left free from outside interference, they would settle the question of slavery, for the Free State settlers outnumbered the Pros as three to two. Gov. Shannon had made a written agreement to keep in future all Missourians away from the polls, and although Brown had not much

faith in the pledge, he believed that the settlers would not again allow such a flagrant piece of injustice to occur as that which had placed the Pro-Slavery men in power.

Brown could muster nearly a hundred men in case of emergency, and these could probably repel any force that might come into the immediate vicinity. And if the other districts in Kansas did the same, the State would be secure. So now there was nothing to do but wait—work and wait. He still toiled away at the carpentry, now often getting a dollar and a half a day for his services.

The farmers were busy plowing, and from the knolls one could see teams busy in the fields in every direction.

But besides the blackbirds and the geese, and the cranes and the emigrants came other excursionists—a company of armed men from Georgia. They built a blockhouse near Osawotomie, threw up breastworks and planted cannon. Old man Brown went over to see them. He chewed a straw and asked questions that were answered with half smiles of amusement and contempt. They only considered this white-whiskered Yankee a queer old farmer whose bump of curiosity was abnormally developed.

But the old farmer got at the facts, which were these: The troops were duly commissioned as a U. S. force, they were there "to keep the peace," which meant that they would back up the present Pro-Slavery Territorial Government, and carry out the wishes of Governor Shannon.

Soon there came word that a similar company of men from Alabama, duly armed, uniformed and commissioned as U. S. troops, were encamped near Lecompton. Governor Shannon was playing a waiting game—he would yet get his revenge.

A grand jury at Lecompton met and found true indictments against Branson, Holcomb, the "Free State Hotel" and "The Herald of Freedom."

To indict individuals has been a custom since the days of Cain, but to indict a hotel and a printery was a new departure. Branson and Holcomb were kidnapped as quietly one night as a weasel captures a chicken. They were carried off to the jail at Lecompton.

The next night the "Free State Hotel" and the printing office were captured by the Sheriff. Both buildings were burned to the ground, and the houses of several leading Abolition citizens were also fired. Many other houses in Lawrence were searched for arms, several stores were rifled and goods confiscated on the grounds that they were the property of lawbreakers.

So quietly, thoroughly and systematically were these plans carried out that the citizens had no time to defend themselves. The troops from Georgia and Alabama took no part in these depredations—the work was done by men brought by Sheriff Jones from Missouri.

Meantime Captain Brown was at work in an out-of-the-way spot fifteen miles from home with Oliver,

helping build a house for a newly arrived settler who was down sick with fever and ague. Fred, Owen and Salmon were earning a dollar a day and board, bridge building near Hickory Point.

John, Jr. and Jason were at home farming. They had heard of the arrest of Branson and Holcomb; of the burning and sacking at Lawrence; they had also heard that warrants were out for their own arrest, and that of their father, for rescuing Branson from the Sheriff. They did not know just where their father was working, neither did they know the whereabouts of their brothers; and even if they had they dare not leave their wives and children; so they prayed hard that their father and brothers would soon return and meantime they prepared for a fight, in case that Jones should pay them a visit.

And Jones came. He came in the daytime, when they had expected he would only dare attack them by night. Jason was plowing a half mile from the house when off to the north he saw a cloud of dust. Running to a lone hickory tree that stood near, he climbed up until his eyes could command a distance of five miles or more. A party of full fifty horsemen was approaching.

"They are coming, John, the Missourians are coming!"

"Very well, we have been expecting them."

"But there are fifty—what if they capture us—think of the fate of Ellen, Wealthy and the babies in the hands of a drunken mob!"

"But we can fight, too," said Ellen, "I can shoot.

"No, we can only hold out for a few hours before such a force. You must go to the woods."

"Without you?"

"Yes, just you two women and the children."

"And then"—

"Hide in the hazel bushes until night, and then make your way to Osawotomie and give the alarm—we can hold the ruffians off for a day at least! To the woods at once—to the woods!"

Jason helped the women and crying children to the ravine, and down through brush and grass they went for the timber, half a mile to the east. He got back and the brothers barred the door just as the Missourians appeared over the knoll two hundred yards away. The crack of a Sharpe's rifle brought them to a quick halt. They withdrew a short distance, stopped, conferred and dividing in two parts, they slowly circled the little clump of houses and barns.

There was much sharp firing, and the balls pattered like hail against the log house, but no flag of distress was sent up.

Darkness came. The firing ceased, and then was begun by the invaders with renewed energy. No balls struck the house, and had the two men inside been observing carefully, they would have seen that the streaks of light from the rifles of the enemy went nearly straight into air: the firing was only to divert their attention while hay was being piled against the house.

A little flicker was seen and the firing ceased; then a slight crackle was heard. The wind arose. In a minute the flames shot up as high as the roof of the house. The shingles caught and a crawling line of blaze went creeping up to the ridge pole. The flames quickly spread. The house was doomed.

John and Jason came out of the door, their hands above their heads, in token of surrender.

X

ACROSS that ten miles of space that separated Osawotomie and Brownsville, the two women made their way. The tired children, bewildered by the unusual experience, made piteous outcry, or else doggedly laid down on the damp ground, and instantly going sound asleep, declined to be waked, either by coaxing or threats. With full stomachs it is possible that they might have accepted the situation all as a part of life —so easily do the young adapt themselves to environment—but in their fright the mothers had forgotten all thought of food: and hungry children—like hungry men—are rebellious, and ripe for revolution.

Three of the children were Ellen's and four Wealthy's; the eldest one of the flock was six years old. Two were babies that could not walk. So the mothers carried the youngest ahead and laid them down on the ground and then went back for the others; and by carrying, dragging and urging they made progress—slow indeed, but it was progress.

And all the time they could hear the sharp crack of rifles and they knew that penned up in the house their husbands were answering shot for shot. Could the men hold out until help came? that was the question. The minutes were precious, for it was for these women to give the alarm, and every moment of delay meant just so much longer for John and Jason to hold out against the enemy.

Four miles had been made and the crack of rifles had turned to a faint, dull booming. Still the women toiled and struggled forward, now and again looking back to where lay "home, sweet home," and then forward to the haven of refuge—yet miles away.

"What is the light we see back there, Ellen?" asked Wealthy.

"Do not ask, sister, it is our home."

"What, have they fired the house!"

"It must be so!"

"Then our husbands are dead. Oh, why did we not go back and share their fate!"

The woman sank on the ground; and the children dropping down around her, huddled up close to her body trying to protect themselves from the chilling night dews.

Ellen took off her shawl and spreading it over the stricken woman and the heap of sleeping children, breathed a quick prayer for their safety and started alone through the darkness towards the town from whence help should come. And off to the north the sky was suffused with a rosy glow.

XI

IT was near nightfall of the next day before Fred, Salmon and Owen were found by the messenger that had been sent out for them. Their camp had been shifted to a point some miles south, where a new bridge was to be built.

They hastened to Osawotomie and found the two women and children in the hands of kind friends. Wealthy was ill, delirious with fever, and three of the children were also sick, the result of exposure. The townspeople had made no effort in the direction of rescuing Jason and John Brown. Why should they? Such outrages were happening all about. Horses were stolen, cattle stampeded and the barns of Free State men were being burned—every one must take care of himself.

The four houses which made the rising city of Brownsville were burned, that was sure—certain citizens of the village had gone out to see. What had become of John and Jason no one knew.

Salmon tried to raise a posse to go in search of his brothers, but to leave home and spend time, provisions and horseflesh on a skirmish of very uncertain result, with no reward but small honors, was not a pleasant undertaking. In fact the Free State people were fast losing heart and they had nearly come to the conclusion that it was as well to accept the situation and lock their convictions up in their own breasts.

At daylight the next morning the three brothers started to find their father. When other advice failed and the air was full of doubt and mist, they had ever turned to him, grown men that they were.

Straight out to their old home they rode. They found the logs that once made their dwelling, still smouldering. But all was burned—houses, barns, sheds. Not one of their horses, not a cow was to be seen; not even a chicken, nor a sheep, nor a pig. All was laid waste and where their promising garden had been three days before, now was only a trampled mass of vegetation, ground into the earth by the tramp of many hoofs.

The sight was too sad to linger over; they turned their horses to the west.

They moved forward over the soft turf in silence, each man too full of his own thought to talk. Riding over a rising knoll a faint line of rising smoke was seen coming out of a gully a mile away.

"It 's a camp," said Owen. "Either Indians or Missourians. No one who did not wish to hide would camp in such a place—hold my horse and I 'll crawl

up to the left through the tall grass and find out what it is."

The men dismounted and Owen skirted the knoll and soon was lost to view in the rank swale. In an hour he came back and reported that he had crawled within fifty yards of the camp. They were armed men with sentinels set—a motley lot and evidently on no good errand.

A ride of eight miles, and a cabin in process of erection was found. Working away getting the rafters in position for the roof was their father.

"Is it possible you have not heard the news?" called Salmon.

"Yes, I know the news," answered the old man from his elevated perch.

"And you know that our houses are burned?"

"Yes."

"And stock run off?"

"Yes."

"And that the women and children are in Osawotomie?"

"Yes, such news travels fast—it was passed on from cabin to cabin and reached me yesterday."

"And did you know that John and Jason are dead?"

"They are not dead."

"How do you know?"

"Read this letter."

The old man reached into his bosom and brought forth a piece of brown paper that he dropped fluttering to the ground. The paper was written over

both sides with a pencil; and it ran as follows:

LECOMPTON, May 19, 1856.

Dear Father:

The sheriff has John and me on charge of rescuing Branson. They handcuffed us together and drove us like cattle all the forty miles here. The jail is only a wooden building with iron rings in the floor where the prisoners are chained by the feet. Everybody comes in and stares at the prisoners. Yesterday a party of Missourians amused themselves by standing off and spitting tobacco juice in our faces, but Governor Shannon came in the afternoon and ordered that we be given good treatment. He says if we will agree to get out of Kansas and never come back that he will let us off. John has been out of his head but is some better now; if we could only hear that the women and children got to Osawotomie safely I think John would soon get all right.

Do not attempt to rescue us—the whole town here is protected by soldiers. Don't worry about us. There are seven other Free State men prisoners here, and we all expect to be put over the border into Nebraska with a threat that we shall be killed if we come back. The intent is to either kill, drive out or silence all Abolitionists. They will kill you if they can, so look out. If you think the odds are too great to fight against let us all get out of the state soon.

I send this secretly by a boy who offered to carry a message to you; he is a son of a Free State man, sent here by his father he says. He may simply turn it over to Gov. Shannon, but I hope it reaches you.

JASON.

"Well, what 's to be done?" asked Owen of the old man, who had now come down and joined the group.

"Get the roof on this house the first thing."

"And not try to rescue the boys?"

"Not now, you see that 's what the ruffians expect. If we should march our little force on Lecompton now, they would swing in behind and bag us all. Now just stake out your horses and give us a lift here, these people have lived under a wagon long enough, we will finish one job at a time."

"And if we finish this job we will be finished ourselves!"

"Why so?"

"There are at least forty Missourians hiding in Henderson's Gulch!"

"Well then, we must find what they are about—the section line runs near here, don't it, Salmon?"

"I believe so."

This was an ancient joke and all smiled feebly. The old man was a surveyor and always carried his flags, transit, chain pins and stakes with him. The instruments always diverted suspicion, for only Pro-Slavery men were allowed to do Government surveying.

And so starting out with Salmon and Oliver in a one-horse wagon, leaving all arms behind, the old man drove within a mile of the gully where the Missourians were camped. Getting the line due east and west, he sighted the transit straight through the enemy's camp. Oliver went ahead and planted the tall

red flag. He was motioned now right, now left, and finally got the attention of the men in the ditch. Then he moved up nearer and again set the flag—more waving to right and left, and then more squinting through the transit.

Then the flag was carried up and placed right on the brow of the enemies' camp. Several of the crowd came forward, looked on and tried to be sociable with the young man. But he was a stuck-up youth who was too proud of his flag to talk to common folks. He barely explained that he belonged to the United States Government Survey, and that he was sick of the job and wished he was back in Kentucky; then he moved on through the gully and planted his flag on the opposite crest.

The transit moved on up, and the old man behind it squinted and motioned first with one hand, then the other. Soon he, too, reached the camp, and the loungers found him to be gruff and unsociable, too. He answered their questions in monosyllables, and was too intent on his work to pay much attention to them. He sat down on the ground and figured and figured in a blank book, and at last he seemed relieved, for evidently the computation came out right, for he thawed out enough to allow a big, hulking fellow to squint through the glass. The man could not see much, but several others tried it, and when the old man took out of his pocket a dark-colored piece of glass and fitted it over the face of the transit and pointed the machine at the sun, the men flocked

around and took turns in looking through. They were greatly pleased, and to think that so high an official as a Government Surveyor who got sixty dollars a month should have paid them this deference was highly gratifying.

The old man shouldered his instrument and started off, but seeing the little brook that ran through the gulch, he took off his boots and dabbled his feet in the water—so much walking had blistered his feet, he explained.

And as he sat there on the grassy bank, he talked with the men and they talked with him.

"Are you cattle men?" he asked.

"Hell, no, we are after bigger game than cattle."

"Well, what is it?"

"Why, have n't you heard of how the Abolition Yanks are raisin' the devil round here?"

"What do I care for the Yanks—I 'm a surveyor."

"Well, they are talking Abolition and getting the slaves restless. They oppose the reg'lar government—up and take pris'ners away from the Sheriff and raise particular hell—we 're from Mizzoury and are over here to quietly clean 'em out."

"Won't these Yanks obey the laws?"

"Won't obey nothin'!"

"Well, surely they deserve punishment."

"And they 'll get it, stranger, or else I 'm a liar!"

"There's an old fellow I 've heard of by the name of Jones who you should look after."

"Brown, stranger, Brown—he 's one of 'em. We

grabbed two of his sons, but there is quite a nest of 'em besides the old 'un—we are going to do him straight!"

"Oh, you mean hang him?"

"That 's it, string him up, that is, if we can catch him alive; if not, we 'll lay for him with a shot-gun!"

"Well, why are you waiting here?"

"Oh, some of the settlers are locating these pestiferous Yanks for us! We are waitin' so we can do the whole job in one night. When we strike, we 're goin' to hit hard and then git."

"Well, if these Northerners can't obey the laws, of course you 've got to protect yourselves against them, and you should help yourselves to their property, too."

"Now you 're talkin' sense, stranger. That 's what we do: take their horses and cattle, and when we go back we want to take 'nuff that 's worth while—we divide 'em."

Brown looked around at the motley crew. They were all heavily armed, and men who in a good cause might fight, and fight hard. Some were mere ragged adventurers, but others were farmers who actually believed that they were engaged in a good cause. The old man looked them over with mingled contempt and pity.

His glance ran from one to another, and finally his eye rested on a man lying at full length on his stomach about twenty feet away. It was a homely face this man had, it was so homely as to be attractive; beside that, the man was older than most of the others in the

party and this would naturally call one's attention to him. The fellow's chin rested on his hands and as he lay there smoking a cob pipe he looked straight out in front at Old Brown; a half smile was on his face, and his grizzled red whiskers and little sharp eyes gave him a fiendish look.

Brown looked again and gave a half start of surprise as the fellow closed one eye in a long wink, looking straight at him with the other: then the old man turned and put on his stockings and shoes.

"Well, boys," said the surveyor, "I 'll have to be going if I make Hickory Point for camp to-night, good-bye and good luck to you."

"Good-bye, sah, and same to you," said several of the men civilly.

The man with the cob pipe was Jim Slivers.

XII

THE little surveying party reached Hickory Point in time to camp—of course they did, for once out of sight of the Missourians they made good time. Oliver got the shot gun out from under the wagon seat and they had broiled prairie chicken for supper.

At nine o'clock in walked our old friend Jim Slivers whistling "Yankee Doodle" as he came.

"Hungry as a woodchuck—nothin' but sow-belly an' pone for two weeks—rogues feed it is! Lively now, an' get an honest man a square meal."

Oliver stirred up the fire and began broiling one of the prairie chickens on a spit that had been reserved for breakfast. And Jim Slivers squatted by the fire and chuckled and chuckled to think what a good joke he had played on John Brown by appearing in this unexpected way. Brown had not seen him for five years and did not suppose that he was within a thousand miles of Kansas.

"Where 'd I come from? wait till I pick the bones

of this here canary bird an' I'll tell—from Ohio, where 'd you s'pose."

"I know, but what was you doing with those cut-throats?"

"Eatin' their bacon and finding out what they was goin' to do!"

The years had left their marks on Jim Slivers, but he was still a boy in disposition. He had the negro's liking for fun and trifling, and nothing pleased him so much as to give an air of mystery to his acts.

"And where did you join them?"

"At Westport—I came as a roustabout on a River boat, an' when I got to Westport they was callin' for volunteers to go over into Kansas and clean out the dam Yanks, an' so I up an' 'listed."

"And now you 've deserted!"

"Have I?"

"It looks like it."

"Well, s'pose I had n't, what would become of you day after to-morrow night?"

"I don't know—what?"

"Hang you for sure—hang you and Oliver there and Owen, and the whole caboodle of you, 'sides killing Adair, Morrow, Hines and Brockett!"

"Why, these are all settlers right around here—Free State men!"

"I know, they 're all goin' to die day after to-morrow night. Doyle, Sherman, Coleman, Huson an' Wilkinson are spotting 'em all, an' are goin' to lead my frens straight to 'em."

"That Coleman is the man who shot Dow!"

"Yes, I heard him brag of it."

"And were these men at the Missourians' camp?"

"Yes, Doyle, Sherman, Coleman, Huson an' Wilkinson—I've been sayin' the names over to myself 'cause I was afraid I'd forget 'em."

"And supposing I had not run my line through that camp and found you?"

"I knew where you was an' would have found you to-night jest the same! Oh, I 'most forgot Missus Brydge she sent you a letter—it's sewed up in the linin' of my vest, you'll have to cut the thing open. An' I'll jest take a snooze; I've been sleepin' with one eye open so long that I'm nigh done for."

Jim rolled up in a blanket with feet to the fire; Owen and Oliver did the same and the old man read and re-read. It was a long letter and evidently of importance, for it agitated the reader so sleep was out of the question.

Before daylight he called his three men. A hurried breakfast was prepared and while they ate the old man explained his plan. It was simply to notify the Free State men whose lives were threatened, collect as many men as possible, turn the unfinished house into a fort by throwing up earthworks and then await the coming of the Missourians.

"Oh, if we only had the arms that were burned up in our house!" moaned Owen.

"I guess they were n't all burned. I buried a full dozen or more guns and all of those short swords

in the garden after you left," replied the old man.

"And they are there yet?"

"I rather guess!"

"We will need the swords if it comes to close quarters!"

"Well, let Oliver and Jim take the wagon and go dig them up, and you and I will go around and quietly notify all the loyal settlers we can find."

So they parted there on the prairie, just as the sun came up out of the great ocean of waving grass that stretched away like a tideless, changeless sea. Jim and Oliver made their way to the blackened ashes that once had been a happy home, and the old man with his stalwart son trudged off through the wild sunflowers that waved in the morning breeze, to tell men that other men intended to murder them.

Jim and Oliver followed the directions given by the old man and found the buried tools of war. Instead of obeying orders and waiting until nightfall, they loaded them at once into the wagon. The swords were of a very ancient pattern and had been given to Brown at Springfield, Mass. They were heavy, short and double edged.

Jim took out one and flourished it in the air, making passes and thrusts at an imaginary foe:

"Jeeminy Krismus! but I 'd like to get a jab at that man Coleman with this here toothpick!"

* * * * * *

Oliver and Jim did not reach Old Man Brown that night, as agreed. Their absence caused much appre-

hension. It was well towards night of the following day before the white horse hitched to their wagon was seen coming at a weary trot across the prairie.

"We have just heard frightful news," exclaimed Fred to Oliver, as the wagon stopped and the young man stepped out on the ground.

"What is it?" asked Oliver.

"Last night some one went to the houses of Doyle and Sherman and several other Pro-Slavery men, and calling them out, killed them with axes or scythes or something"—

"Went from house to house?" asked Jim.

"Yes."

"And called 'em out, you say?"

"Yes, on pretense of having a friendly message of some sort!"

"And when they showed up in the doorway, they got slashed?"

"Yes."

"Well, we are the men who done the business," said Jim Slivers. "One night more an' they would have slashed you: we took time by the forelock, an' killed five of 'em without the pop of a gun—Is supper ready?"

XIII

NO attack was made by the Missourians that night. The men who were to pilot them to victory were dead : a frightful sudden death had come to them, a death without warning, or time for preparation or parley.

Messages had been going back and forth from these men to the Missourians' camp, and so the summons at the door was answered without thought of harm. In fact the Southrons up to this time had not been molested ; on the part of the Free State men, the war had been purely on the defensive.

It was a terrible blow that had been struck—a frightful, savage blow. It came in the nightime, like a swift and secret vengeance of God. No uproar had been made, but the heavy two-edged swords had cleaved the skulls of their victims at a single stroke.

It was the capricious work of reckless youth and hardened, unthinking age. When there is murder to perform, and rough riders are wanted to go out and cope with hell, only very young men should be pick-

ed: boys of eighteen have neither caution nor conscience: they are possessed by a foolish confidence in fate, and in their growing strength they believe neither in God nor devil; and if they once taste blood, they are savages.

Practically Oliver and Jim were of one mind. Jim had lived many years, but he had not learned discretion nor manly caution. His cool cunning had served him in such stead that he had come to think that he had a charmed life, and like untried youth, he loved to dally with death and play at skittles with the grave.

To do this fearful deed alone they thought was the height of bravery; it was getting the start of others who might have been glad to do it; it was prowess to be proud of, and what a joke! These men whom they had run through with steel, were about to go forth on deeds of murder, and the doom that was to come to others had broken upon themselves.

But upon that midnight raid hinged the fate of Kansas, and the fate of the Nation. The Free State men in Kansas were discouraged, and were about to accept the terms of amnesty offered: silence or retreat. The Missouri River was closed to Northern immigrants going westward, but not east, and the tide of home-seekers from the north had been turned back.

But now five of the chief defenders of Slavery had been struck down in a single night. Not shot from a safe distance, but beheaded, slashed, disembowled, their blood and brains spilt and scattered. An im-

pression had been made—a terrible lesson taught, the terrible, salutary lesson had been made plain that God slumbers not nor sleeps.

The Southrons placed the mangled bodies on display and men came for many miles to look upon the shattered forms. The scene was frightful and shocking, even to strong nerves, but the people that came knew that these were the men who had stolen the horses, stampeded the cattle and burned the barns of Free State settlers. These headless forms were once the men who had painted skulls and cross-bones on doors, who had frightened women, had made threats, and then fulfilled them by shooting down Northern men who had refused to leave. These were the men who had invited into the Territory, and were acting as guides for an armed force from a sister state, that was doing what they dare not.

The Free State men were shocked, but horror gave way to confidence, and Brown rallied a force of fifty men, where days before he could not get twenty.

The Missourians still remained in camp, hesitating whether to go or stay.

Brown waited not for an attack, but marched his men upon them, in battle array, out across the plains; the men entrenched in the gully prepared for fight. The firing was fast and furious, and all the time the Yankee forces were creeping closer.

Suddenly on the crest of the hill behind the gulch appeared a young man wearing a cockade, and bearing a banner. He waved his sword and called back

to an imaginary force behind, "Come on boys, come on, all of you!!"

Thinking that a charge was being made upon them from two sides, the Missourians became panic stricken and rushed down the valley—the only way open, and thence across the prairie to the east, in a frantic flight, pursued by a force that gained in numbers as it moved.

XIV

AKING advantage of the fear that was cluttering the hearts of the Southrons, Brown rode out with five men and captured two prominent slave-holders who lived near the Missouri line. The men were seized in their beds, before they had an opportunity to resist. A letter was dispatched to Gov. Shannon, offering to exchange these prisoners for the two Browns. With Old Man Brown's letter, each of the kidnapped men sent an urgent personal appeal that Shannon should comply. And Shannon complied—the exchange being affected the next day—Brown's word of honor being accepted to release his prisoners, if John and Jason were given safe conduct to Hickory Point. They were taken there and released. The next day the two well frightened slave-holders were back in the bosom of their families.

But who struck that murderous midnight blow? Old Man Brown, everyone said. The Territorial Government offered a reward of a thousand dollars for

his capture. This was a good deal of money in those days, but it was not enough to tempt any local officer to go after him. The fear of meeting a fate similar to the five Pro-Slavery leaders, had a most wholesome and restraining influence. Where would lightning strike next? Who could tell.

The Browns were homeless and were being hunted by an armed force. Peaceful employment was now denied them—they must stick together and sleep on their guns. They were heavily armed, and they made their camps in the bluffs and woods that lined the streams—moving from place to place. Provisions they must have, and so they made short forays out among the Pro-Slavery settlers, and demanded what they wanted. Where they could locate a fine horse that belonged to a slave-holder, they went out and took it—the enemy that had proscribed and ostracised them, must pay the expenses of the ostracism. They were splendidly armed. Various adventurous young men among the Free State settlers joined them, so their force numbered about forty in all—which included John Brown and seven sons, and a son-in-law—Henry Thompson by name, who had come on from the East with Watson Brown, in time to share the ignominy of their brothers.

Practically they were fugitives from justice—they had defied the Territorial Government. Wilkinson whom they had killed was a member of the Legislature—a sham Legislature to be sure, chosen through fraud—but nevertheless the law-making power of the

Territory, duly installed and recognized by the General Government of the United States of America.

And so they lived houseless, homeless, hunted, yet not unhappy. They fared on the best that the country afforded. The Free State people had no fear of them of course, and in fact, aided, abetted and succored them in many ways, keeping them informed of the movements of the two hundred U. S. troops that were out after them.

There were occasional skirmishes, but the troops were wary of coming in contact with this fierce band of freebooters, whose fierceness, although not whose bravery, was greatly over-estimated.

And so a month passed with several killed on both sides; but confidence was coming back to the Free State settlers—Brown was at large and fear kept the Southrons civil.

But now a new officer had been sent on by the Government to take charge of the U. S. troops. This officer was instructed by his superiors at Washington to avoid any collision with the insurrectionists, but if possible, to get them to return to their farms. In fact, it was a diplomatic move, for Congress had finally gotten awake to the fact that this little prairie fire started away out in Kansas might possibly spread and become a conflagration that would sweep the land. Yet Congress sympathized with the slave interests; but to boldly join sides with the Missourians and to use the Army to put down the Free State men was too brazen a thing to undertake. And they were right.

And so it came to pass that John Brown and his little band of fighters held their own; and meantime the newspapers of the North issued notes of warning that had echoed, even through the legislative halls at Washington.

"It will not do to make war on any class of citizens—Massachusetts is getting warm over this thing," said the President to his Secretary of War.

"Very well, I 'll send a cool-headed man to Kansas to take charge of the U. S. troops, and give him orders to act as a peace-maker and induce all armed bodies to separate and return to their homes."

The Secretary of War chose a Colonel by the name of Brydges—Richard Brydges—for the delicate mission, and Colonel Brydges duly arrived on the ground and took charge. His first act was to send a message to "Captain Brown" asking for an interview.

The men met close out on the prairie, on horseback.

Colonel Brydges was tall, slender, in age something under forty. He wore glasses and had the look of a student rather than a man of war. His brillant uniform and sword rather belied the bookish cast of his features; and as Old Man Brown looked him over from under his shaggy eyebrows, he rather liked the fellow.

The men dismounted and as they walked forward towards each other, their hearts beat fast. The Colonel had expected to see a fierce robber—booted, spurred and armed to the teeth: he saw only a plain old farmer whose long white beard gave a patriarchal

suggestion to the sober face. Brown carried no arms.

Brydges had dreaded the interview—not through a sense of danger—but to parley with stupidity and obstinate ignorance is never pleasant. These men shook hands—looked each other square in the eyes and each heaved a sigh of relief. Each saw that the other was a man sensitive, discerning and honest. When men with equal intelligence and purity of motive meet, subterfuge and formality can be laid aside. There need be no attempt to impress, nor effort to conceal, nor struggle to make plain. They guage each other's hearts as though they had lived under one roof.

"I know your mother," were the first words of the old man—spoken quietly. The other gave a look of surprise. "Yes, I know your mother. When I saw your name—Richard Brydges—I could not think it possible it was you—that two men should bear the same name would not be near so wonderful as that I should meet you here"—

"I—I do not understand"—said Colonel Brydges, taking off his glasses. He half thought that these rumors he had heard of this old man's insanity might have basis in truth.

"When did you see my mother last, Captain Brown?"

The old man looked off across the prairie, smiled sadly and answered: "Not since you were born!"

The Colonel shifted from one foot to the other; he now felt sure that this beautiful calm on the face of

the other was only the peace that sometimes comes to the illusioned soul.

"Not for forty years? and yet you could see a resemblance between me and her—you have a good memory, sir!"

"Too good, perhaps"—

"And not having seen my mother for forty years you still say that you know her?"

"Yes, here is a letter from her!"

Brown took from a pocket-book a soiled and creased letter and showed it to the Colonel.

"Why—surely in Heaven's name, yes! it is my mother's writing. Let me see the signature!"

"There is no signature. When she writes to me she does not sign her name."

"And why not, pray?"

"You officers of the army might be sent to arrest her for treason!"

"And can it be possible that you are the Brown that used to live in the Western Reserve?"

"The same."

"Why, often have I heard my mother tell of you—but what are you doing here?"

"Fighting for Freedom's cause."

"And my mother is encouraging you in this insurrection, just as she encourages you to run off slaves?"

"Yes."

Colonel Brydges paused, bit his mustache and then took off his glasses and wiped them on a silk handkerchief:

"I see it all," he said after a moment, "you have only shifted the battle ground and changed the methods a trifle. In other words you have been found out and now have to fight openly."

"Yes, you have guessed it."

"But what a little world it is! and to think that my mother should have an indirect hand in raising this rebellion that I am sent out here to put down! She always was a fanatic on the subject, though."

"Of slavery?"

"Yes."

"And you?"

"Me? why I 'm an army officer and have no opinions—I obey orders."

"But you do not believe in human slavery?"

"Well, possibly not, although my grandfather was a slave holder."

"Yes, I 've heard he was."

"And you knew him, I should judge, by the way you speak?"

"Yes."

"And did he not treat his slaves—that is, his people well?"

"Undoubtedly: one of his sons is a member of my company over there in that woods."

"One of whose sons?"

"Your grandfather's."

"An uncle of mine in your robber band? the plot thickens—but you are joking, my uncles are both dead."

"This is a colored man."

Colonel Brydges blanched, coughed and answered after a pause:

"Captain Brown, we are digressing. My business here is to request you to disband your company, and have all of your men return to their peaceful occupations."

"And the Missourians?"

"I have orders to scatter all armed and organized bodies of men in Kansas. If the Missourians march into Kansas, I will send them back."

"And after I lay down my arms, what then?"

"I will not molest you."

"But the Territorial Legislature has offered a reward for my capture!"

"I know, but they will withdraw it if you will agree to leave the Territory. You see, your presence here after what has happened is aggravating. In fact, they want no more bloodshed, and if you will say quits, they will: will you do it?"

"Yes, but you have no authority to speak for the local government?"

"No, but I will go with you to see the Governor —I am sure he will grant you amnesty."

"And if he does, will you use your force to keep back invaders at election time?"

"I surely will."

"And you know what that means?"

"No, what?"

"It means that there are seven hundred more Free

State men in this Territory than Pro-Slavery and that Kansas will be a free state. We have won our fight."

"All right! I congratulate you. I will see the Governor first alone, and make an appointment with him to receive you."

"Very well."

"Then that 's all for this time?"

"I believe so—good-day!"

They shook hands there on the prairie—one rode one way and one the other.

XV

THREE days afterward, following the road that skirted the ravine, they went—Old Man Brown and Colonel Brydges. Brown in rusty jeans, rustier than ever from much rough weather: on the pommel of his saddle a Sharpe's rifle and in the belt buckled outside of his coat, two pistols and a dirk—all dangling handy, worn for quick use and not for show.

Behind these two horsemen rode two more—Salmon Brown and the Colonel's orderly. Young Brown was arrayed like unto his father: he carried the heavy rifle, with a jaunty touch, that seemed to match the solitary eagle's feather worn in his slouch hat—a sly bit of irony for the benefit of the tightly, brightly buttoned orderly. But the orderly and Salmon were soon on good terms; youth quickly makes friends, and Uncle Sam's soldier boy had a wholesome respect for a man who was one of forty to hold at bay two hundred; and Salmon assumed that the other must be a brave lad or the Colonel would not choose him

for this office. So they told stories, did these two. They laughed and joked as young men will who are much under the heel of discipline, and are suddenly turned out to play with none to reprove. They rode full fifty yards behind their superiors, and as Salmon chatted he balanced the rifle with a single fore finger and ran his eye across the prairie this way and that for any chance foe. There was a price on his father's head and a warrant of arrest out for himself —dead or alive—and if they took either him or his father, it would surely be dead.

And as the young men behind told tales of strife—without much regard for truth, mayhap—and the horses moved forward on a sleepy fox-trot, now and again turning aside to nip at the rosin weed that lined the road, the two men who rode ahead conversed on more earnest themes.

"Yes, my mother is a regular fanatic on the subject of emancipation. When I left home to go to West Point, I was nearly as bad as she—I suppose I drank it in babyhood, but once established in the Army, I saw the futility of her work and wrote her trying to dissuade her from the fruitless task."

"And did you succeed?"

"Succeed? Ha, she argued me into silence."

"But you forget that I am engaged in exactly the same work!"

"Oh, no, you 're not—this business here is different. You only want home rule for Kansas!"

"Yes, but the Southrons call me a slave-stealer."

"I know, they think you are a robber, but brigands are often only exiled saints. If law pushes a man too far, he loses respect for all law and then is an anarchist. Now all you want is that settlers in Kansas should make their own laws. You object to illegal elections—and the reason you have defied the laws now is only because these laws were made by a fraudulent legislature. Am I right?"

"You certainly are."

"Well, this is a private talk, mind you, not official, so I say confidentially that in Washington they prefer Kansas should be a Southern state, with all it implies. For one thing, it means two Southern senators. Now there are sixteen free states and fifteen slave states—two more are needed to preserve the balance of power. But they cannot afford to wink openly at a corrupted ballot box. 'Cause why? the whole North might get right up and howl—no telling what might happen—it might even come to civil war. Now you have kicked up such a row out here and attracted so much attention that the Government is obliged to step in and put you down, and if she puts you down she must keep Missouri out."

"I see."

"We do not want to fight you for that would make all Yankeedom look on you as a martyr; and on the other hand if you should refuse to lay down your arms it makes treason of it. Now my mother does not confide in me very much since we disagreed on the slave issue some years ago, but I 'm quite positive that

she would not encourage you to keep up this fight."

"Would n't she?"

"No."

The old man took a letter out of his breast pocket and handing it to Colonel Brydges, said: "Read it aloud." He read:

My Dear Friend:

We hear through the papers and in various ways of what you are doing. Do not give up the fight—you are doing God's work; all this agitation is making public opinion. When the North gets wide enough awake to realize the enormity of slavery she will arise and free the slave from the slave-holder, and the slave-holder from his sin. It is only the apathy and dead indifference of people that make this curse possible in a so-called civilized land.

But let me tell you right here that if you strike one good hard blow for right in Kansas, that the sense of Justice which sometimes sleeps, but never dies, will be aroused, so that Kansas will be left free in future to make her own laws. And once you have done this, you have not only freed Kansas, but you have prepared the way to free the United States of America.

When you strike for the right in Kansas, Public Opinion shakes off her lethargy, comes forward to stay your arm, and the South cowers. When you have done your work there, smuggle a small band of determined men into Virginia and strike slavery a sudden blow, then retreat to the friendly mountains. The South will be staggered, yet she will pursue. But instantly the North will awake and come to your rescue, and better still, the slaves will arise. The snow-ball will grow as it rolls. In a year, two, three or four, the South will be free and the General Government will endorse

by Legislative Enactment the work which you begun.

Do you know that a few Spartans flitting from point to point in the mountains dictated a policy to all Greece? Do you know that Scotland was never subjugated, simply because a few clansmen who knew the crags could stand off regiments? Do you know that in the mountains that separate France from Spain are tribes that have for centuries successfully defied the armies of both countries? Do you know how Napoleon left Elba with a handful of men, and marched into Paris with a million at his back? Do you know how Schmeyl in Russia dictated to the Czar from a cave? and last but not least, have you forgotten how Nat Turner, a black man, held out for six weeks against the State of Virginia?

When my beloved son was but a lad, it was my dream that he should be the leader who would "make my people free," and I sent him to West Point to learn military tactics. It was a mistake, but I did not know then that army life means intellectual and moral stagnation. Like a University it often irons men out to one dead level and extinguishes all masterly individuality. My son is a worthy man, and I love him with a true mother's love, but he is not great enough to dare all and win all. For his has been a happy and successful life—he has never received his baptism of fire.

And so I turn to you, the lover of my girlhood, and on you I fix my earnest gaze, for I know that you are one raised by God to do this work. Moses was eighty when he led the Children of Israel out of bondage—do not tell me you are too old!

You and I have left romance far behind—what is this life to us—a breath—a vapor! We have nothing to lose; we have all to gain!

Remember the sword of Gideon!

Brydges read the letter straight through in a voice that grew husky towards the last. He handed the missive back and turned his face to hide the unsoldierly emotion that was shaking him. They rode in silence for an hour.

"The dear old mother!" at last broke out the officer abruptly, "the dear old mother needs some one to care for her—I must resign so as to be near her."

"But is she right in those historical instances?"

"Yes, I suppose so, but that is neither here nor there. Why, she is such a fanatic that if she were younger she might take the field herself!"

"And indeed, women have done it before."

"I know—you refer to Joan d' Arc, but she was crazy!"

"And successful!"

"Well, possibly."

"And it was women who went out from Paris and captured the palace at Versailles—women who precipitated the French Revolution."

"How comes it you know anything about the palace at Versailles, Captain Brown?" said the other with a smile, feeling that the conversation was getting too serious.

"I 've been there."

"What, you 've been to France?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Three years ago; I 've carefully gone over most of the battle fields of Europe."

"Then my mother's ideas are not new to you?"

"No."

"And has she written them to you before?"

"No, but thought is in the air. Do you believe in thought transference?"

"Not I; still, minds dwelling on the same subjects will, of course, often come to like conclusions. But do you know who that man is coming up over the knoll?"

"Yes, I know him."

"Well, who is he?"

"The newly appointed sheriff."

"Right you are."

Brydges smiled, but the old man did not change his expression in the slightest. One hand went up to his pistol belt.

The sheriff stopped, saluted, rode up on one side of Brown and remarked that he had thought best to come out and ride in with the little party to avert any possible trouble that the citizens of Lecompton might make. Brown thanked him for his thoughtfulness.

"By the way," remarked the sheriff as they rode forward, "by the way, Captain Brown, you of course know that the offer of a reward of a thousand dollars for your arrest is still valid?"

"Yes, I know."

"Well, I have the warrant now in my pocket."

"You 'd better keep it there, Mr. Sheriff!"

"Why?"

"If you take it out, I 'll kill you."

"Oh, I beg pardon, I was only joking."

"You are unwise to joke with death."

They reached the village of Lecompton, and were well stared at by the citizens, but no incivility was offered.

Governor Geary, who had recently been appointed, came forward and greeted Captain Brown as one gentleman greets another.

Shannon had been so dictatorial to the Northern immigrants, and so hand-and-glove with the Southrons, that the relationship between the two parties was growing very much strained. Neighbor did not trust neighbor, and the whole Territory was a tinder box ready to explode at a touch.

Under these conditions Congress had wisely relieved Shannon and put a more diplomatic man in his place.

Geary had a fairly just and judicial view of the situation. Personally he confessed to Brown that he sympathized with the slave-holder, but he was there to act as Governor of the whole people; he wished to see justice dealt impartially and hoped that prosperity would come to all.

He talked earnestly and frankly and Brown was impressed with his obvious honesty. On the other hand Brown set his view of the matter boldly forth; and the strong point he made was that so long as Missourians came across the border and interfered with elections, there would be strife and bloodshed. Governor Geary freely admitted that only actual settlers should be allowed to vote and further that Northern

immigration into the Territory should not be restrained. He was willing to use every influence that he could bring to bear to carry out Brown's demands for a pure ballot; and further he would grant amnesty to all who had been engaged in the recent strife provided they at once returned to their homes.

But there was one condition he insisted on and that was that John Brown and all of his sons should leave the Territory. Their presence there, he argued, was a continual reminder of what had gone before. In fact, the Browns had struck such fear and hatred into the hearts of the Southrons that there was danger that under the influence of some undue excitement, whiskey, for instance, that there would be a thirst for revenge and the flames would burst forth afresh. If they would only go, he would issue a proclamation setting forth the facts and warning Missourians to keep to their one side of the line, and cautioning all parties to keep the peace. This would be assuring to North and South alike and bring confidence to all concerned.

Brown listened patiently to the strong and logical appeal. He smiled with a half-smile of satisfaction when Governor Geary admitted that the Browns had practically carried the state for freedom.

"And now will you consent to leave?"

"Yes, I will go, but my sons are land owners here —I want them to stay."

So a compromise was effected whereby Brown was to leave the Territory within ten days; his men were

to disband and return to their homes; amnesty was to be granted for all past offenses; and none but actual settlers who had been in the Territory three months should be allowed to vote at future elections. This was put in the form of a stipulation and duly signed.

That peace had been brought about on such equitable terms was a matter of congratulation to all concerned. A courier was sent out to carry the good news; and Captain Brown and Colonel Brydges accepted Governor Geary's hospitality for the night.

The next day they started back for camp with much lighter hearts than they had brought thitherward.

Near nightfall, when nearing Brown's camp, they took a short cut across the prairie. A woman came out of a cabin and called to them that there was the dead body of a man lying in the road a half-mile to the north. They turned back, and on reaching the spot indicated, found the body lying face down in a pool of blood.

Brown dismounted and turned the man over.

It was his son, Fred. He was not dead, but a tearing wound in his side from a charge of buckshot told that his moments of life were few. In reply to questions he managed to painfully whisper that hearing peace had been declared he had started for the Post-office, unarmed, and had been shot down by some one concealed in the tall grass.

The effort to speak hastened the hemorrhage—his head dropped back in his father's arms.

The young man was dead.

XVI

THE man who had lain in wait and shot Fred Brown was Martin White, a preacher of the Methodist Church South, a member of the Territorial Legislature and a citizen of considerable prominence. No arrest was made: the sheriff putting forth the plea that White did not know that peace had been concluded. White did not, however, accept any such excuse for his act, but openly boasted that he "had done for one of the Browns."

Not long after, White was found dead in his own dooryard: the ball from a Sharpe's rifle had struck him square between the eyes, and the light of his life was snuffed out.

John Brown's band had separated and gone to their homes. The old man was at Osawatomie with Ellen, Wealthy and his grandchildren, to bid them goodbye before taking his departure for his old home at North Elba, New York. While there this letter reached him from Captain Carver of Westport:

WESTPORT, MISSOURI, Sep. 10, 1856.

TO OLD MAN BROWN,

King of the Kansas Yankees:

So you have got to git at last! We feel so sorry you are going to leave us—but when the Governor says you have got to go, and the U. S. Army says so too, we can only say farewell, and may the Devil take you.

But slavery is not dead in Missouri and it never will die, for we are not Puritans, but sensible folks. There is to be an auction of niggers here next Thursday, come over if you can—the boys will make it pleasant for you.

Yours truly,
CHARLES CARVER.

Brown smiled grimly at this insulting, exultant letter, and passed it over for his children to read.

"I would like to accept his invitation," he said, and then the matter was put out of his mind.

That night a black man came to Osawatomie, and made his way to where Old Man Brown was stopping. The Negro was so awed on coming into the presence of the man of whom he had heard so much that he could scarcely speak.

"Where did you come from?" asked Brown.

"Wes'port, sah!"

"And to whom do you belong?"

"Captain Carvah, sah."

"And you say he 's going to sell you?"

"Yes, sah, on Thursday, sah, an' my wife too, sah, an' my chillern—we may all go different ways, sah!"

"And why are you to be sold?"

"The Cap'n he say Kansas is to be a free state, sah, an' he 's too close to the bordah, sah."

Brown smiled: "Yes, Kansas is to be a free state, and he is a leetle—just a leetle too close to make slave-holding safe. So you are all to be sold and sent back to Mississippi?"

"Yes sah, there 's sev'ral spec'lators there now—it 's to be a big sale. Can't you help me to git my wife and chillern away, sah! we will b'long to you an' work for you till we die!"

"I think I 'll help you to get away. Carver has invited me over, and if you will just hide in this cellar until evening, we shall see what we shall see."

Night came.

Six heavily armed men and the runaway Negro were driven in a two-horse farm wagon out of Osawatomie across the prairie towards the east. When within two miles of Westport the wagon and driver were sent back.

The men moved on in the darkness, piloted across the fields by the Negro, to the goodly residence of Captain Carver, planter, politician, stock-raiser and slave owner. His house was a mile from the village, up on the hillside, surrounded by its barns, granaries and slave quarters.

The Negro went ahead to pacify the dogs, and notify the Negroes to keep to their cabins.

Old Man Brown had a diagram of the house in his pocket, and a copy of it in his head. He had located each room that must be looked after; and his men

in their stocking-feet, with dark lanterns, entered the doors, open and unlocked, according to the custom of the times, and held the prisoners safely in their beds by the argument of a cocked pistol.

It was a sleek, clean, quiet, gentlemanly piece of work. Not a shot was fired—there was no violence. The inmates of the house, male and female, pulled the bed clothes over their heads, inwardly cursing or commending their souls to God, as the case might be.

Meantime the house was searched for money, and nearly five hundred dollars found. The Negroes had hitched a stout team to a spring wagon, thrown hurriedly in quantities of hams, bacon, sacks of corn meal and potatoes; the Negro women and children were tumbled in with all the bed clothes that were not pulled over the heads of luckless white folks; eight thoroughbred horses were saddled and bridled, so far as saddles would go; and after a parting threat that no person should venture his head out from under a quilt for a full hour under pain of death, the cavalcade moved away: twelve Negroes in all, ten valuable horses, five hundred dollars in money, and provisions for a fortnight.

When the sun came up out of the eastern prairie, a great glowing red ball of fire in the white mist, they were thirty miles from Westport, and in a land of Free State people—people who did not know them personally, but people who would have fought for them had the pursuer pursued. The horses were strong and lusty and were given a slack rein. In forty-eight

hours the Nebraska line was reached. Two days more and they were in Iowa.

Here they stopped to rest for a space, and when camp was again broken, only Old Man Brown and Jim Slivers accompanied the twelve Negroes: the sons must all remain in Kansas for the "salutary effect" of their presence. The other men turned back on foot and made their way into Kansas to live the lives of honest and peaceful citizens.

And so Old Man Brown with his Negroes and his horses and his five hundred dollars moved on to the North and East. And the question naturally arises how a conscientious man, as Brown surely was, could justify himself in taking other people's property in this way?

The answer is plain: as for the Negroes, they were God's children as much as though they were white, and no man had a right to hold them in bondage and give them stripes as legal tender for services rendered. Having worked, they were entitled to wages: at the smallest calculation there was due them a horse apiece, and the five hundred dollars in money was simply to pay expenses.

Only three of the Negroes were full grown men; they were armed and of course the old man and Jim Slivers were never without a rifle within easy reach. As they marched, Brown did not try to conceal their identity. And after a week he openly proclaimed it in every town, village and hamlet as they passed.

"They were once slaves," he would say. "I stole

them away and am taking them through to Canada." And the crowd would send up a cheer for " Brown—Osawatomie Brown."

Across Iowa they moved, into Illinois. Northern Illinois was settled largely with New England people, and here ovations were tendered them, and often deputations of maidens in flowing white, carrying green branches, came out to meet them in wagons, with men on horseback. Provisions were tendered them without money and without price. And although they were often invited to do so, they did not accept the hospitality of houses, preferring to sleep in their tents, which were always pitched, when possible, in the outskirts of some village.

The inhabitants would flock out to see them, and using the wagon for a rostrum, Brown would tell the story of Kansas persecution and appeal to the people in behalf of freedom. So great was his zeal that none dare answer him. And all the time the Fugitive Slave Law was in full force.

Indiana was reached, then Michigan, which was practically another New England, and when the November winds began to blow chill, they had come to Detroit, all without sickness or disaster, and the five hundred dollars intact, for the gifts given them had exceeded the expenses.

The money was divided among the Negroes. The team that drew the wagon, with the entire camping outfit, was given to the black man who had suggested the exodus. The eight horses were unanimously voted

to be the property of Old Man Brown and the jovial Jim Slivers, who had cracked jokes from Kansas to Canada.

After the refugees had been ferried across and were safely in Windsor, Canada, a solemn service of thanksgiving was held, and prayers ascended to God for their deliverance out of the land of bondage.

When the old man and Jim bade their charges good-bye, many tears were shed, and years afterward Negro men and women boasted that when they were babies John Brown had taken them in his arms and blessed them, for had not their mammies told them so?

And taking sorrowful leave of these black men and women with whom they had lived as one happy family for full two months, John Brown and Jim Slivers took the ferry back across to Detroit.

Each riding a horse, and followed by the six other faithful steeds, they rode down to Toledo and on to Cleveland. Here they were among old friends—friends who knew them well and who had known them for many years.

In the two daily newspapers Brown advertised that on a certain day at noon he would sell "eight horses taken from Missouri slave-holders by force, as payment for wages due black men." The sale was to occur in the public square of the city of Cleveland. The announcement also set forth that the money which the horses brought would be used to further the cause of Emancipation.

The unprecedented boldness of the bulletin attracted a large crowd.

Seated on his thoroughbred stallion, Brown told, simply and plainly, how he had gained possession of the horses. He cautioned prospective buyers concerning the defect in title and also gave a short sketch of his experiences in Kansas. The crowd cheered and when quiet was restored the horses were sold to the highest bidder. And be it said in token of the temper of the bidders that the animals brought nearly double their actual worth.

"The Lord is on our side! The sword of Gideon will yet be triumphant!!" said Old Man Brown—Osawatomie Brown.

BOOK FIVE

CHAPTER I

KANSAS was still the scene of strife; Brown was willing it should be so. Let the people look that way and let them view the inhumanities that would spread over the entire North, like the plagues of Egypt, if slave owners only dare! Another thing, so long as the public gaze was directed to Kansas, it was diverted from other directions.

This shrewd old man knew that peace does not come in a day—it takes time for wounds to heal, for revenge to die, for hate to sleep. Kansas was free, yes, in name, but not in fact. Painful days of reconstruction must follow; and in this interval there would be many men who "did not know that peace had been declared," and these men would again and again tear open the bleeding wounds and some would pay the penalty. But freedom, full, complete freedom would come! Brown's faith faltered not, nor blanched, his determination did not waver in the estimation of a hair. Freedom would come to Kansas! Aye, and to

the entire country. Sixteen of the states were free, the other fifteen soon would be. God had decreed it!

These sixteen free states contained over three-fifths of the entire population of the country, two-thirds of the wealth, nine-tenths of the manufactories, four-fifths of the newspapers; the North printed all the books. In the free states, illiteracy among American-born was a curiosity. In the South for a black man to read and write was a crime, and fully one-third of the white population were as ignorant as the Negroes.

Yet the people, even the Christian people, were not awake to the enormity of the sin of slavery. To traffic in human flesh, to buy women in the market place, to see men feel them over as they would a horse and after paying the price, lead them away; to snatch children from the breasts of the mothers who bore them and sell the innocents away into bondage; to separate wife from husband and then hunt them with bloodhounds if they adhered loyal to love and followed the North Star—yes, to kill this man and woman, and still go unpunished, all these things stirred the soul of John Brown. And that these things should be carried on by professed Christians—men who pretended to be followers of the meek and lowly Jesus—seemed to him the rankest blasphemy.

Proportionately, church membership was larger in the South than the North, and the thought of the darkness and corruption that had gotten into the very fold of God shook this strong man with wrath. If Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple,

what would he now do if he should come and see the auction block right in the very portals of the sacred place!

Only when out of reach of the clutch of the American Eagle, and under the protection of the British Lion, was a black man safe in the New World. And this in America, of all places! The United States of America, the boasted birthplace of liberty, whose Constitution flatly states that "all men are born free and equal," America, the home of the oppressed, and the place of refuge for the persecuted—that America should still retain this relic of darkness, when even Europe had in shame discarded it, was an affront to High Heaven. Cannibalism was gracious compared to slavery; cannibalism fed on the dead, but slavery sucked the blood of the living.

A leader was needed! a leader who would sound the trumpet and cry aloud, "Freedom, Freedom in the name of the Lord!"

The sixteen Northern states would stand at his back and give their young men and their treasure, the four million slaves would arise and the one-third of the white population of the South, who were not slave owners, would at least keep hands off; and Victory, glorious Victory would come.

A leader was needed; a leader to sound the trumpet blast that would rouse the sleeping North.

John Brown had pondered these things in his heart; for years he had thought of scarcely aught else. He had listened for the Voice. It came, and it said: "Thou

art the man." And surely it must be so. Destiny had denied him peace at home, had robbed him of woman's sweet companionship, had wrecked his financial plans and played havoc with all his worldly ambitions. Providence had been only fitting him for this great work during all of the long, restless, unhappy years.

And Brown knew this fact, that stands out against the dark background of history like a star: Only through the poor, the outcast and the despised can society ever be reconstructed. Ruskin states this truth, but John Brown did not get his logic from John Ruskin. Faith! 'tis highly probable he never heard of Ruskin, although Ruskin came to hear of him, and paid to his memory a tribute, rich and rare.

The earth held nothing for Brown—he had been stripped of all, and holding all worldly ties so loosely had given him an iron courage, a bravery that knew no bounds. He had many times looked into the very eyes of death there in the West, and he had never faltered. Standing out on the prairie unprotected, he had answered shot for shot. Not once had he been scathed, not once had he felt an impulse to turn back. In every instance he had come off victorious when he had met the foe, face to face. He believed in Fate.

In fair fight, with ten men, he had defeated a hundred. And he had left Kansas simply because he had done all that his presence there could do—time alone could work out the rest.

The God of Battles was with him!

The outdoor life, the healthful fare, the change from cheerless plain and savage scenes to peace, plenty and applause, worked wonders in John Brown. His eye took on the lustre of youth, his step became elastic instead of plodding, his form was strong and vigorous.

He had tasted success! what is so sanitary as success? It means quickened pulse, deep breathing, good digestion, sleep filled with pleasant dreams. Brown felt younger than for years. He gazed into the glass and saw with a slight shock the long, white beard of a patriarch—it was not in keeping with his young heart! He had the physical strength of youth and he knew in his soul that he could ride further, shoot straighter, endure more and hit harder than any man of thirty who could be found on the streets of Cleveland. And this is what pure air, pure motives and purity of life will do for a man. He never touched tobacco, nor strong drink, and in eating he stopped on this side, instead of going to that. He did not even drink tea and coffee. His conscience was clear, his ambition high. And flavoring it all was this feeling of power. He had looked into the muzzles of loaded guns and had them turned aside at his word of command; he had dictated to governors; forced issues with sheriffs and parleyed successfully with United States officers.

And does any man who is not ripe for the grave admit even in the sacred silence of his closet that he

has lost his "manly vigor?" No good woman was ever yet so old but that she was sure she was still attractive to the opposite sex. The man in whom the sense of chivalry is dead has passed to a point where the undertaker should claim him. Sexuality is the law of gravitation of the social world, and all noble, heroic actions, as well as the fine courtesies of life, and the tendencies that make up the art impulse, have their rise in this: the loves of men and women.

John Brown's eye was clear, his breath sweet, his teeth white, his form erect, but his beard—a year's growth—was snowy white. He took a second look in the glass and straightway hied him to a barber's.

When he came forth he had lost his beard, but gained ten years in life—in looks, at least. The smooth shaven face showed the firm mouth, the strong jaw, and the lines of care were less deep than in the days agone.

He bought a new suit of clothes, and felt an inclination to sneer at the clerk who suggested "something modest for a gentleman getting along in years." The suit was grey with brass buttons, after the manner of the times.

The cartridge belt, the two trusty pistols, and the long, dangerous, threatening dirk were wrapped up and placed in a valise. The rifle was packed away, and exchanged for a simple walking stick.

His appearance no longer caused people to turn and stare at him as he passed along the streets, no small boys followed him, and he smiled grimly to

himself as he thought how easy it would be, if a little worldly prosperity should come, to slip back into mere snug, smug, complacent respectability.

But he had a purpose, a great, sublime and glorious purpose. He was entering on the plans to carry this purpose to a successful conclusion. Yet the plans were not quite clear in his own mind yet—all in a sort of solution—he needed to discuss the details with some strong, clear, sympathetic soul. The bare fact of explaining matters to a friend makes them clear to one's self. In truth, it requires two to generate an idea.

He resolved to go to Cincinnati and see Margaret Brydges.

II

JIM SLIVERS was delighted to know that John Brown was going with him to Cincinnati. They took the southward train that night.

"The Missus, she never know you in the new togs," said Jim.

"Mrs. Brydges has not seen me since I was a boy," said Brown, adjusting his cravat.

"Lordy, is that so—why, she talks of you heaps!"

"That is simply because we ran the 'underground' together, and wrote letters back and forth."

"An' yet never see each other?"

"No, I suggested going to see her once and she said it was hardly necessary."

"But you 're going now?"

"Yes, I have a great plan—a great plan, Jim—I have to talk it over with her. I'm going to free all the slaves in the United States."

"Lumety, dumety, dee—you don't say?"

"Yes, I can't explain it all to you—the scheme is

not yet complete—but in a year I will strike a blow that will shake the institution to its very center!"

"Where do I come in?"

"Of course you are going to help. You did splendid service in Kansas."

"I 'spect I did—killed five men in one night, me and Oliver—even you never done so well!"

"Jim, never you mention that night's work again."

"Why?"

"It is the one thing on our Kansas record I 'm ashamed of."

"But when folks said to you face to face that you done it, you never denied it!"

"True, I did not."

"If you was 'shamed of it, why did n't you say it was me?"

"That would not have relieved me of the blame."

"But it would ha' give me the credit."

"No credit should be claimed for murder."

"But you said yourself that it was the one thing that saved Kansas—it made ev'ry ruffian shake in his boots."

"And so it did—but it was inhuman just the same. Come, let us talk of something else."

"All right—we 'll talk of that money you got for the horses."

"Yes, I got just fifteen hundred dollars; I 'm going to use the money in my plan."

"Your plan to free all the niggers what is?"

"Yes."

"Well, I 'm a nigger, an' some money will make me feel freer than I do now!"

Brown turned and looked at the fellow. Jim was showing a selfish side of his nature that had never before been revealed in Brown's presence. Brown thought a moment and it came over him that possibly Jim had rights which he had not fully respected, and that he had hardly treated this rusty, red-whiskered little man fairly. Jim had been loyalty itself, and had shown a bravery under fire and elsewhere that was most admirable. He had obeyed orders—worse than that, or better—he had exceeded them! To be sure, his intelligence was not far-reaching, and it were useless to explain to him extended plans, but in an emergency he was invaluable. In short, it came over Brown that if the whole car of forty men should at that moment turn on him and try to bring about his arrest, Jim would spring up on a seat, produce a pistol out of his boot, a knife out of his sleeve and put the whole crowd to flight.

"And about—about how much money do you think I should give you?"

"I won't lie to you, John Brown,"—

"Very well, state how much you expect!"

"I want a dollar and a half to buy a present for Jennie."

"What?"

"A dollar and a half for a gold-plated ring for my old woman."

"Here 's five—get a solid one!"

Cincinnati was reached late in the evening. Cincinnati, worthy namesake of Cincinnatus, who left his plow in the field to go fight in freedom's cause. Many, very many of Cincinnati's sons left all to strike strong blows for truth—left farm and factory, store and shop, wives and babies, sweethearts and parents—and many of them never came back.

Perched high up on a bluff, commanding a view of the winding, muddy river that divided the slave state from the free, was a large brick house. Once a suburban mansion, but now without the many touches on grounds and surroundings that mark the home of ease and wealth. Down in the valley, factories—belching black smoke from tall chimneys—coal docks, machine shops and engine houses marred the once quiet view.

And this big house—relic of plutocracy—was now a school, a school for white and colored alike. And this being so, it was mostly a school for colored. The pupils ranged from picaninnies a year old, who were left during the day while their mothers went out washing, to woolly preachers of fifty, who had preached long years without knowing how to read, and now become as little children that they might enter the supposed kingdom of heaven where knowledge dwells. Hard and stony, these old scholars found the path that leads to learning. Some of them after a year only got as far as c–a–t and d–o–g, and there they stuck, victims of arrested development. And yet these men could repeat chapter after chapter of the Bible—with

occasional improvements, of course—and line off hymns of marvellous length, and if, perchance, memory lapsed, a ready wit supplied the missing line and rhyme—a foot one way or the other, what of that! Yet with tears they regretted their inability to read, not knowing that all things in life are sold, never given; that the law of compensation never rests and that with the ability to read things out of a book, Memory would in jealousy flee and leave only the slattern, Recollection, in her place.

In this big house were anywhere from five to forty pupils. The terms began any time and never ended. There were no vacations and no tuition fees. Those paid who could and those who could not, need not. No servants were employed, save Jennie, the housekeeper, and Jim Slivers, man of all work. Jennie was Jim's wife.

All of the rest of the work was done by the helpful hands of scholars. Sometimes these scholars stayed but a single night, packed away in barn, outhouse, cellar or garret, carted off in clothes hamper like Sir John Falstaff—not dumped in river, but carried to a place of safety, and then piloted by the Pleiades.

This old house, with its marks of decayed gentility, could be plainly seen in the daylight from the Kentucky side; and each night, all the night-time through, there burned, side by side, two lights in the attic windows. What though angry clouds darkened the pole star, these lights burned bright, a beacon beckoning onward, a promise of welcome! Every evening

at sundown for many years, the mistress of the house had trimmed and lighted these lights; at day-break she put them out.

This house was a refuge to the oppressed, a home for the homeless. Here were taught not only the three R's, but the dignity of labor and the excellence of cleanliness, and right, and truth, and purity, and all that makes for righteousness.

And was it an effort thrown on the idle winds for these two white-haired women to thus expend their time and substance? In ministering to a barbaric people—a people of whom it was argued that they had no souls—was it an attempt to bale out the ocean with a spoon to try to educate them? Small results came, very small indeed, for all these years of patient endeavor. Society held its skirts close when these women passed by, fearing contamination. Their money grew less and less as the years passed; no honors came to them; in history their names are not known; above their graves, now close side by side, no proud monument rears its granite shaft.

They lived, they loved, they worked, they died, they sleep. Fanatics? who dare say it! Heroes, rather, the Christ-Spirit working through the loving mother-heart!

"See those two lights—that 's the place—Lordy, I 'm glad to see it—what 'll my Jennie say, she never 'spects I 'm coming!"

They had left the station and followed the railroad track. The early winter night was gathering along the

banks of the gloomy river. The old man looked up at the lights. They seemed to gleam no welcome for him—he fain would have turned back. He, valiant man of war, undaunted even by death, now hesitated at thought of meeting a woman. He had suddenly become but a silly youth.

They climbed the hill, and passed in at the alley gate behind the house—straight in at the kitchen door without knocking. Jennie was there busy at the table, washing dishes. Jim stepped up behind her, placed his hands over her eyes and shouted, "Guess who it is?"

She "guessed" who it was and turning quickly, applied the soapy wash cloth vigorously to his face, and then, as if to make amends, kissed him three times with resounding Afri-American smacks. Brown stood still.

Jennie was a fine looking mulatto woman, whose smooth iron grey hair gave a certain dignity to her dark face. The first surprise at seeing her "man," over, she glanced up and saw this tall stranger looking on interestedly. Hastily pushing Jim to one side, she courtesied and stepped forward to receive his bidding, not knowing that he had come with Jim.

"Guv'ner Brown, this is Missus Slivers—Missus Slivers, Gen'ral Brown of Kansas."

Jennie suddenly lost her assurance. She had heard much of Brown, and his virtues as related by Jim were always multiplied by ten. In fact, all of the heroic incidents that his imagination could invent were fixed

on John Brown, and numberless deeds of daring that rightly belonged to others were transferred to his credit, when detailed by Jim.

This had gone on for so many years that Jennie had come to think of Brown as a mythical being; and now that she was suddenly brought face to face with him, it was like getting an introduction to the god Mercury—only Jennie had never heard of Mercury.

A decided blush would have been seen had epidermis permitted; she stammered, hesitated, but was soon put at ease by Brown taking her hand and saying in a very matter of course way that he was glad to see her.

As soon as Jennie got her tongue, she began to chide her husband for bringing the visitor into the kitchen instead of ushering him into the parlor. But this reproof was cut short by the appearance of Mrs. Brydges. But now it was Brown's turn to blush, stammer and hesitate. But he, too, was put at ease by Mrs. Brydges taking his hand in a very matter-of-course way and saying she was pleased to see him. No introduction was required: she saw Jim: she recognized Brown.

"My son is here, Captain Brown, he came yesterday."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, he told me of meeting you in Kansas, and that you had left there, and so I half expected you would come and see us."

Brown was getting hold of himself—here was

trouble and disappointment to start with, but these were the things he thrived upon. This United States officer, in brass buttons and dangling sword, gentleman though he was, had ordered him out of Kansas. Now he was to be embarrassed by meeting him here.

And then Margaret wore no blue dress. She was not a delicate, beautiful young woman, nor even a sorrowful, middle-aged widow, but a woman of near sixty with snow white hair, strong and hearty, inclining almost to stoutness, and quite self-sufficient as a matronly widow should be.

There was no touch of sentiment in her voice nor hand-shake: only good, plain, frank friendship.

She called up the stairway: "Richard, Richard, Captain Brown is here!"

There was a sound of pleasure in her voice, and evidently Colonel Brydges had given Brown a standing, for did she not say "Captain"? But it came over Brown that tender romance did not live so long in a woman's heart as in a man's and he smiled just the faintest shadow of a cynical smile.

"Good evening, sir—where is he—where is Captain Brown, mother?"

Richard had come into the room, cast his eye around and was out again in the hall.

"Here he is, here! this is Captain Brown, why, there must be some mistake—you said that you knew him."

"I am John Brown—Colonel Brydges does not know me on account of my wearing no beard."

"Can it be possible?" exclaimed the Colonel. He turned the visitor around twice and gave him a most cordial, yea, even affectionate greeting.

Then Ruth Crosby appeared—white-haired, but with the vigor that comes with earnest purpose and systematic employment. The Colonel's greeting had thawed Captain Brown. Tears came to his eyes as he kissed Ruth's cheek—sentiment, after all, was not dead. And now the ice was all thawed—they shook hands again all 'round.

"Can't we have supper in here, mother, say yes, please—just us four?"

And so the mother smiled on her big boy, and said, "Why, for this once, of course—we don't have Captain Brown with us often."

A white spread was put over the centre table, and a colored girl brought in the tea and toast and the poached eggs and the hot biscuit, and they drew up their chairs.

"I resigned my commission, Captain—resigned to come home and take care of my fanatical mother!"

"Rather he resigned and came here so that the mother could take care of her fanatical son," laughingly said Mrs. Brydges.

"I hardly understand," said Brown.

"Why, you converted him."

"I—to what?"

"Abolitionism."

"But we did not argue the question."

"It was well you did not, or it would have only

set Richard deeper in his heresy—it was your life that did it!"

"You mystify me."

"Why, Richard wrote me that he came near saying to you, 'Thou almost persuadest me to be a Christian,' and now he is so over-zealous on the subject of emancipation that I have to restrain him."

"Don't worry, it won't hurt him."

"We could not convert him—he thought us only silly women, but when he saw you, your heroism won him," said Ruth.

Brown did not hear what she said. He glanced at her and then at Margaret—these two women looked much alike: beautiful faces they were: they shone with the beauty that comes with years devoted to high thinking—that subtle, feminine beauty that only is revealed where spiritual aspiration keeps pace with intellect. Ruth's contact with Margaret had worked a wondrous change for good in both. Engaged in the same work, thinking the same thoughts, living the same life, they had grown alike.

Brown's successful work in Kansas and the fact that Richard had come over to the Lord's side, gave these women renewed courage.

For the time they talked with the lightness of youth, and Richard added the zest of witty repartee and allusion to the sparkling conversation.

"How peculiar it was to have Governor Geary beg you to leave," said Margaret.

"Yes, leave the country for the country's good."

"And thus allow both sides to think they had won. You won, in fact, but the Pros have the satisfaction of saying you were banished!"

"It must have been glorious going back to your men—to tell them that the Governor had consented to your requests!"

Brown gave no reply—he remembered that going back.

The others remembered, too.

"John," said Ruth, "what became of that man who killed Fred, was he arrested?"

"He was not arrested, but he is dead," was the quiet reply.

There was no more light talk now—the conversation became earnest.

"Mother, let 's remove the cloth and have our quadrangular conference at once, right here."

"We will, there 's much to discuss—Captain Brown has a definite plan of action—let us consider it."

The dishes were carried out, the cloth removed, the door was locked and John Brown laid before them the plan.

III

THE plan was not peculiar nor complex; it was not even original. It was an adaptation to America of what Schmeyl had done in Russia.

The proposal was to select some rocky, mountainous point on the border of a slave state and strike a hard, quick blow for freedom, just as Brown had done in Missouri when he had run off the twelve slaves. The raid would be carefully planned and carried out with a boldness and swiftness that would terrorize the slave interests. The policy was to strike and retire. All great battles, even in pugilism, were won on just such tactics, and in the world's war history, time and again, small numbers have thus defeated great. By withdrawing to fastnesses where cavalry and artillery could not follow, a few determined men could hold off regiments.

Slaves would be given their freedom and white prisoners occasionally taken and then exchanged for blacks, man for man: for the black men would make

excellent and willing soldiers. Besides this, slaves would be constantly coming over to them when it was known that liberty was theirs for the asking. Supplies were to come from foraging, and thus the enemy would supply both the sinews of war for aggression and defense.

Unlike the raid of Brown into Missouri, this first bold stroke must be severe enough to startle the entire land. To attack merely a few plantations and run off the slaves would not be enough—it would be of too local a character. The disease was virulent—it had taken hold of the very nation—the treatment must be heroic. To that end the Federal Government must be attacked—the demand for freedom to all must be made upon the United States of America. The cry must be, "Give us liberty or give us death."

The Constitution granted equality, the Executive refused it. These lovers of liberty, loyal to their country, arose against their country for their country's good. They loved their native land too well to allow it to do a disgraceful thing. Like Virginius they would even strike to her death a beloved daughter rather than see her become the prey of infamy. Nothing held slavery in place but heredity and tradition—the cords must be cut.

When the first blow was struck the bold band would fall back to a place of safety. Their cry would be taken up by the entire North, but the general Government having been attacked, troops—both militia and regulars—would be sent in pursuit. These

troops would be repelled—sharp shooters from concealed and unlooked-for spots would teach them caution. Meantime another blow would be struck at some unexpected point. Struck in the night without warning, quick and severe, giving the idea of numbers. This would give the slaves courage and there would be uprisings all through the South, that would give each community all it could do to look after its own affairs. No able fighting men could be spared from any one point in the South to go in defense of another.

After three or four sharp raids, and as many uprisings—for the Negroes were already impatient and ripe for revolt—President Buchanan would issue a call for volunteers to put down this spontaneous cry for liberty—which he would call "internicene revolution." This call would be answered by several thousand young men of the South, and a few adventurers of the North. But the sentiment of the North being almost entirely Anti-Slavery, the inhabitants would not, of course, think of leaving their homes to fight for an institution they despised.

President Buchanan's proclamation for troops would be followed by another: a call would go forth from John Brown. To this the Anti-Slavery people of the whole land would respond and the young men of the North and West would flock to his defense.

Two-thirds of the people being opposed to Slavery, Congress would convene and the President would be compelled to issue an Emancipation Proclamation.

He would also grant amnesty to all engaged in the uprising, and order all bodies of armed men to disperse.

Then laws would be passed for the better protection of the colored people, and time, the great healer, would do the rest.

It might take one year, it might take two or three. But all that was needed was a leader—a bold leader, one who could "be bold, be bold, but not too bold." Once started and the country aroused, the conflagration could no more be stopped than a prairie fire could be ordered back by Congress: it was a natural law at work: the revolt of the human heart at certain deeds, which must occur when civilization has reached a certain stage.

But the fuse must be carefully laid ere the train be lighted.

The undisciplined blacks and whites that would flock over to them would be a mob: they must be trained, whipped into shape and armed before they could do effective service. Competent men should be ready for this work of drilling, and arms must be secured ere a single shot be fired.

It would take time to secure these men to officer the blacks, it would require effort to secure money to purchase arms, and all must be done with the strictest secrecy: this was imperative.

"And where would you begin?" asked Ruth.

"There are many Anti-Slavery people in the mountains below Kentucky. To strike the Blue Grass

country and retreat into Tennessee is my plan. The Louisiana Swamps are a good refuge, but I feel more at home in the mountains."

"The point to strike is Harper's Ferry, Virginia—I 've been there within a month. The place has about four thousand people—it is in a valley and all around are hills where no cavalry can go," exclaimed Col. Brydges.

"I 've thought of that, too," said Brown.

"And I believe that Mrs. Brydges suggested it to you both," said Ruth.

"Very likely, but we will not scramble for honors now—wait until there are spoils to divide."

"Or blame to fix."

"Possibly! The whole thing is an idea yet—every great reform was once an unspoken word. But this one is assuming shape—I know military science and I believe this thing is wholly feasible. The Bashi-Bazouks have made a science of stampedes. It is the safest, cleanest, strongest plan of warfare that exists—a return to first principles—and when backed by public sympathy, as this will be, it 's bound to win. Captain Brown, you shall be General-in-Chief of this glorious crusade—Nature and Experience have done for you what West Point and Scott's Manual have failed to do for me. I will be second in command and will support and obey you."

"It 's not the glory I desire—I simply wish to do my duty."

"You have the power, and the ability is the call!

Captain Brown, do you not feel that God has pushed you out from your fellows to do this work?" asked Mrs. Brydges.

"Yes, I 've sometimes thought so."

"The years have been preparing you for it. That Kansas warfare has made your name known to all the leading Abolitionists of the North. Go and see them personally and prepare them for the stroke you are to make—secure their promise to back you. This will be easily gotten, but it will be more difficult to raise money to purchase arms. But money must be had. You need not tell them where or just how you will strike, but let it be thought that you will follow example and march into Missouri from Kansas and drain the South of her slaves in that direction!"

"And as for men," said Colonel Brydges, "we only want a few to start with—too many would be a disadvantage—they would attract attention to the plot."

"How many, think you?" asked Mrs. Brydges.

"Oh, not over a hundred, and these must be scattered so as not to excite suspicion."

"Well, it will take time to pick these men who will officer our raw recruits. I 'll select them myself and you go prepare the North by quietly seeing every leading Abolitionist."

"I will do it—but your work is already partly done—I have six sons ready for you now, and in Kansas there are at least five men, I know, who have been tested under fire, who will join us."

"Good, we want no one who has not faced fire. No man knows whether he has courage or not until he has smelled powder."

"Then we want a topographical map of every county, through the Pennsylvania line at Harper's Ferry to North Carolina."

"Surely we do—that 's where the fight will be."

"Well, go make the map."

"I 'll do it!"

"And meantime we will pray and hold the rope, as the women did when St. Paul was let over the wall in a basket," said Ruth.

"Your prayers will mean much—when success comes the credit must go to Margaret Brydges," exclaimed Jonn Brown.

"We will talk of that later—it 's past midnight—honest folks should be abed."

They shook hands and separated for the night.

IV

BROWN left Cincinnati with a heart filled with hope. There was power and purpose in his step, and steadfast faith in the glance of his eye.

Among his peers, could they have been found, his personal magnetism would have swayed opinions as did the will of Cromwell, or Chatham or Pope Innocent. But the great of the earth are few; for the many the horizon shuts out all beyond—the bread and butter question is supreme.

At Hudson, Brown found his father hearty and vigorous as old men go—nearly eighty years of age. He still had his watery eye on the main chance. He felt a sincere pity for his favorite son who had gone off after strange gods. Of course old "Squire Owen" believed in emancipation, but that his boy John had wrecked his life in futile attempts to make men free was a source of grief to him; he fell on his neck and wept.

He knew somewhat of all that his grandchildren

had endured in Kansas, he guessed at the hardships yet to be borne: "Oh, why did they not stay here and be content!" he cried.

Neighbors came in, hearty and brusque, they had scarcely heard of Kansas. Some confused it with Kansas City and thought it near Chicago. They read but little and that only in the "Gospel Banner," which came weekly, and treated mostly of matters celestial, omitting the mundane as profane. Then these worthy neighbors had crops to plant, harvests to gather, to them babies were born and occasionally death came—what did they know of bleeding Kansas? They had troubles of their own.

John Brown had a brother two years older than himself by the name of Jeremiah. We have not before mentioned Jeremiah, simply because he plays no part in this history. He was an honest and prosperous farmer.

"Hain't you mighty glad ye are out of Kansas, John?" asked Jeremiah.

"Yes, but I'm going back."

"Goin' back, do tell! and what for?"

"To free the slaves in Missouri."

"Jest hear him, father! out of one scrape and right into another!"

"Do you think I could rest with the small success I 've had?"

"Small success? I did 'nt know you had any!"

"I helped make Kansas a free state."

"Rubbish! who cares when it 's so far away."

"From where?"

"Why—why from Ohier."

"But Ohio is not the world. There are thirty-one states in this Union—fifteen of them are slave states—I will not rest until all are free!"

"Father, the feller is crazy—he never was just right, you know!"

"So you think I 'm crazy?"

"Not think so! you surely be—you 've got bees in your bonnet."

And yet old Squire Owen did catch the infection just a little; he believed in his son, as fathers will, but his belief was a faith mixed with pity and this is not good mortar. A prophet hath no honor in his own country: Brown did not expect to enthuse Hudson—he could do no great work there on account of the unbelief of the people. But his ardor was slightly dampened by their dullness. He thought of a quotation he had read in Plutarch or somewhere: "In the presence of stupidity the gods are dumb."

It had been nearly two years since he had seen his family. They were still at North Elba—the patient wife and eight children. A baby had been born shortly after he left—a girl whom they had named Annie. This was his twentieth child, but he thought of her with all the tender solicitude that the bridegroom of a year does of his first. From the dullness and deadness of his old neighbors he turned with anxious longing for the chubby baby hands and the sweet baby breath, this baby of the evening of his

days. She would understand, yes, this laughing, dimpled baby Annie would know. He would reveal to her his plan: she would coo a blessing and kiss him damp baby kisses on nose and cheeks, and applaud his high purpose in all the dainty ways that are universal to these little souls fresh from God.

Then he would go forth and find the noble thinking men of the land who had written and spoken on this great theme, so dear to his heart, and he would speak, too.

At North Elba the thrifty wife had made everything spick-span neat and clean in anticipation of the coming of the great man, of whom all felt a bit in awe. They had seen so little of him, they hardly knew him; yet they believed in him through and through. The wife, Mary, no longer chided him on account of his absence, for she felt a faith in the power of the man: a power she could not comprehend nor explain. She was sure he would yet do a great work that would bring him honor and fame and wealth. And in this would they not all share? So what was poverty and privation after all in view of the glory yet to come!

This big family up on the rocky hillside at North Elba had little money—scarcely any in fact. They spun wool and flax and made their own clothing; they raised peas, beans and potatoes: each fall there was a pig to kill, or if the pig had to be sold to pay taxes the boys secured game, and if there was no game for meat, why, they did without. So they were

hearty and happy: for happiness is a commodity that is given out by Mother Nature to rich and poor alike, in equal portion.

The coming of their father was a great event to the juvenile Browns. They were all anxiety for days and days, and walked out on the winding road to meet him miles and miles. And when at last they saw him sitting there in the wagon that had gone across to the stage-town to meet him, they hid in the bushes and fain would let him pass. But he spied them and sprang out over the front wheel to greet them, and they were all taken in and went jogging back, all talking at once, to the old log house where Mrs. Brown was waiting in her new calico dress and big check apron to receive her lord.

There were presents brought for every one—foolish little presents—but very dear and much prized they were. Then there were useful things—sugar, tea, dried fish, rice, bacon, and yards of white cloth and a ribbon or two for the big girls: which the mother thought were not very useful, for they tended to vanity, but the girls were willing to risk it.

Very happy was this coming home! What is better after all than to go home? "We must go home, we must go home. For we have been away so long it seems forever and a day. We must go home; the laughter of the world is like a moan upon our tired hearing: we must go home."

But John Brown could not stay long: he must be about his Father's business. He could tell his wife

but little of his plans. Good woman that she was, all of her days had been taken up with taking care of babies, preparing meals, making clothes, caring for sick folks, and encouraging discouraged well ones. To arise at five in the morning and toil steadily until night; to cook, to sew, to plan, and piece, and patch, and arrange to make one dollar do the work of two, is the fate of ten thousand thousand women, their whole lives through. In such lives the absence of so-called culture and bookish knowledge need not be sneered at—God knows!

Mrs. Brown hardly knew whether Illinois was this side of Kansas or the other, and as for Harper's Ferry—la me! she thought it was in Missouri, so she did! But she was willing to do her work, look after the children, run the farm and spare the big boys and their father to do the Lord's errand, of course she was!

So old John Brown, Osawatomie Brown, kissed her very tenderly, and as he did so the sternness of his strong face vanished and the piercing eyes grew soft and gentle as a youthful lover's, and filled with tears. And he went away again in the wagon that had brought him, out over the great hills, the children tagging behind and dropping off one by one, waving hats and hands until he was lost to view in the never-ending gray-green of the forest.

V

IN NEARLY all the larger towns and cities of the North were Abolition Societies. These clubs or societies were not very popular; sometimes they were frowned upon by the church organizations, who considered them rather meddlesome and foolish institutions, whose only good was that they allowed over-zealous people to work off their superfluous emotions in a harmless way.

But occasionally these societies had as members the best men in the place. Brown went from town to town and city to city making the acquaintanceship of the men who composed these clubs. He was received everywhere with courtesy and sometimes with genuine fervor.

In Boston he found many strong men who were earnest Abolitionists. He met Theodore Parker, Edward Everett Hale, Thomas W. Higginson, Wendell Phillips, F. B. Sanborn, E. B. Stearns, William Lloyd Garrison and many others equally sincere and outspoken.

A day was set for him to appear before the "General Court" and make an appeal for an appropriation for the benefit of New England people whose homes had been despoiled in Kansas. He gave his one simple little address; it was received with profound attention. He was questioned and catechized at length, and although he did not secure the official appropriation which he asked for, yet his speech made so favorable an impression that it won him both dollars and friends.

Many of the villages about Boston were visited. At Concord he spoke in the Town Hall, and in the audience were Emerson, Thoreau, Bronson Alcott and Louisa M. Alcott. So greatly was Mr. Emerson impressed that he went home and wrote in his diary—"I deem Brown of Kansas quite the manliest man I ever saw," and that very night he began the "Essay on John Brown." Mr. Alcott was visibly affected, and having no handkerchief of his own was supplied by Louisa, who shared hers with him. Says Mr. Alcott in his Journal: "He spoke of the distress his children had endured in Kansas and of the death of his son, all with no outward show of feeling, but with a pent up reserve force and meaning that was ominous in its import."

Yet in spite of these encouraging receptions from men of influence, Brown saw that commercial Boston had its ears stopped with South Carolina cotton so it could not hear the groans of the bondmen, and social Boston had no interest in him or his plans. He was

shrewd and wise enough to note that the men who took him by the hand were exceptional.

And even among the Abolitionists there were factions. William Lloyd Garrison was an avowed non-combatant and Wendell Phillips pinned his faith to moral suasion. Brown spent several days at the home of "Wendell and Ann," and plainly told them that while "moral suasion" might answer in Boston, he would as soon load a cannon with hot mush to fight an Armada as rely on such a soft weapon as moral suasion in Missouri. In fact he begged Mr. Phillips to go with him and spend three months in Kansas so that he might properly diagnose the case, but Mr. Phillips preferred the rostrum to breast-works. Yet be it known that the last time Brown met Wendell Phillips, Phillips gave the old man a hundred dollars and said, "Give it to them, John Brown—give it to them with a Sharpe's rifle! You fight in your way and I will in mine, and together, by the help of God, we shall succeed!"

Brown had hoped for a general recognition, coming as he did in the name of Freedom; instead of that it was only here and there that a strong man came out, and often then looked furtively about and expressed himself in whispers. Many Abolitionists were just a little afraid of being laughed at, if not something worse. They would hold parlor meetings, calling in the elect, and Brown would relate his simple tale of Kansas hardship: he would tell without boasting what he had already done, and he told

what he proposed to do, if but the people would sustain him. Such was the power of his unpretentious eloquence that whenever he spoke tears would fill the eyes of those who listened to his recital of the wrongs inflicted on Free State people in Kansas. But when subscriptions were called for the responses would come in form of one dollar bills with an occasional five and at long intervals ten. There was no burning zeal in the matter: in fact those who gave usually extracted a promise that their names would not be mentioned.

In several instances people were met who were so strong and earnest in their faith that Brown partially confided his plans to them, and asked for their individual co-operation. Then it was that they halted and with one consent began to make excuse. One had bought a piece of ground and must go see it; another had bought five yoke of oxen and must go prove them; another had married a wife.

The last named was the most common excuse—the wife and family would not allow: all young men who had no wives seemed suddenly to have gotten themselves engaged. And the universal way that men had of throwing the burden of excuse off on their wives and sweethearts struck Brown as peculiar, until it came to him that man has ever laid the blame of his sins both of commission and omission on woman.

He also thought of how Fred had a sweetheart in the east, and of how she did not hold him back from what he considered his duty. And the next man who

dodged behind a woman got the flat statement from old John Brown that he was a coward, and not being willing to fight for freedom's cause made his wife bear the brunt.

Of course the accused man was indignant; he even cancelled his subscription, and said that in future Abolitionism could go to the devil for all of him.

But Brown was not discouraged. To be sure, he had slightly overrated the enthusiasm of the North; he had forgotten that they were a commercial people and that slavery was a good ways off to most of them; yet he pressed onward and felt someway that he was making head.

"Never mind, it only means a little more time," he said.

A year passed and instead of striking the great blow with the sword of the Lord of Gideon, they met to talk it over. Colonel Brydges being a bachelor considered Cincinnati home and Brown agreed with him that his mother's counsel was valuable and safe.

So again two women and the two men met behind the locked doors of Mrs. Brydges' sitting room and discussed ways and means. Brydges had a better report to make than Brown. He had traveled on horseback and afoot from Altoona, Pennsylvania, down through Chambersburg to Harper's Ferry, and then on through Virginia to Salisbury, North Carolina.

He looked the ground over carefully and prepared a topographical map of the country about Harper's Ferry, and gave it as his opinion that Nature had

arranged things thereabouts purposely for their benefit. "There are flat shelving rocks all through the mountains there where one man can hold off a regiment. The Pass at Thermopolæ is not a patch to a shelving rock that is protected by another, one size larger above it!"

But in getting men he had met with little encouragement. Army officers sided with slavery or else were apathetic. Some were restless and ready for adventure that offered victory, but having no deep feeling in the real issue itself, Brydges could not confide in them. So, often, those who would be willing to go he did not want. It was absolutely necessary that he should move with great caution and not give his plans away to an unworthy person; then Brown had insisted on only temperate men being taken, and this was such a hard condition that he had secured the promise of co-operation from less than a dozen.

As for Brown himself, he had collected nearly four thousand dollars in money, and had aroused ardor to an unknown degree—small or large he could not say. Instead of kindling enthusiam, sometimes he had created opposition. But the women were sure he had done much good, and as for funds he had done remarkably well. But he did not think so—ten thousand dollars at least should be had: for arms and provisions must be bought and stored at various points in the mountains of Pennsylvania and Virginia, so there would be no delay or slip in carrying on the war when once begun.

However, in one sense the war was already on, for in Kansas the fire had broken out afresh on account of continual raids from Missourians, who it seems were unable to give up Kansas with a goodly grace.

So it was decided that Brown should go to Kansas at once, for the double purpose of "keeping things warm," and of securing men for the Virginia raid.

His presence in Kansas was a synonym for war. He appeared without disguise, a rifle on his shoulder and a belt full of pistols. The Free State settlers hailed him as deliverer, and tendered him welcomes that might have turned the head of a younger man. The Southrons looked at him askance, but offered no incivility—it was not safe.

He recruited a following of fifty young men and threw up earthworks about a log fort a few miles back from the Missouri line near Paoli. Spies were sent out to gather the names of all slave-owners in counties along the border, and then Brown went over and released the blacks. In short, the border counties of Missouri were drained of their slaves.

Various Missourians who had been active in despoiling the crops of Free State men were visited and warned. There were several sharp fights and a few men killed on both sides, but peace was secured e'en though it had to be fought for.

But Kansas was secondary in Old Man Brown's thoughts, and little did his fighting band of hardy men know that he was leading them out, not so much to fight the Southrons as to study their quali-

ties and know who was bomb-proof and who not.

Brown had a theory that no man knew what he could do until he tried. Men timid in a parlor, often make the best sort of timber for guerillas. He was culling the basswood from the hickory.

A year passed. Peace had come to Kansas—temporary peace—and Brown had secured twenty men who were staunch as tempered steel. These men knew no such thing as fear; they had intelligence, they had faith in their leader, they were devoted to the cause. But they did not know military science, and as they were to act as officers they must be drilled and tutored.

These men were taken to Tabor, Iowa, and Brydges sent on a competent officer to give this score of men a proper training for the duties yet to come. And let it here be known this town of Tabor was made up of a colony from Oberlin, Ohio; and further that Tabor, Iowa, should be remembered in history as giving more men and treasure in behalf of Freedom in proportion to population than any town in the United States.

When summer came and flowers bloomed the Browns had slipped out of Kansas, one and all. Their presence was not missed. Fred, in his grave, was quiet and still, and the two little graves near of Jason's children attracted no attention, for privation, exposure and strife made graves common there on the prairies, and the busy settlers had only time to think of life.

John and Jason had moved back to Summit County, Ohio, with their families and had rented farms. The intention being that they should stay there until the Great Blow had been struck, then they would take advantage of the enthusiasm, enlist a body of determined men and march to their father's defense, recruiting as they went.

Salmon had taken himself a wife and was now at North Elba, New York, also awaiting the bugle blast when he, too, would march southward with men athis back.

These tides flowing to the South from various directions were counted on as a strong scheme for furthering the cause. An armed force gathers power like a tempest, and the hosts that would march from Canada, Ohio, New York and Boston would arouse the sleeping land as nothing else could. The echo of the steady tramp of armed men—the glitter of bayonets, the shrill shriek of fife, the roll of drums—ah, it means much! arouse ye hosts of Freedom—the time is ripe!

The forty thousand Negroes were preparing. Hundreds, aye, thousands of stern, uncompromising Abolitionists were ready. They knew not from what point the call would come—they knew not where the blow would be struck—but they were ready, waiting, expectant!

Brown had ordered arms—rifles, pikes, swords and revolvers—at Hartford, Collinsville and Springfield. These were being shipped in plain boxes marked

"implements" or "hardware," to various small stations in Pennsylvania and Virginia. Brydges with a faithful twelve met the "goods" and carted them back into the mountains, where they were carried on mule-back and man-back to caves and caches. They were rolled in oil-cloth and hidden away with provisions to be called for when wanted.

The twenty picked men at Tabor were written to come on in squads of four. Brydges had twice as many more ready to respond at a moment's warning. Brown was hurrying forward the arms and munitions. Money had come to him, and a promise of more.

He hastened to North Elba to see that the wife and babies were provided for. He remained but a day and then with his sons Oliver, Watson, Owen, and his two sons-in-law, Henry and William Thompson, he started for Harper's Ferry.

VI

IT WAS midsummer. The blow must be struck before the harvest was gathered —for then laborers were most needed, and could ill be spared. The Negroes would leave the crops to rot in the fields and flock to the deliverers for freedom. This would cripple and tend to humble the proud plutocratic dealer in human flesh, right in the start.

With Oliver and Watson, Brown entered Harper's Ferry and stopped at a modest tavern. They were unarmed and dressed as plain farmers from "York State." They wished to purchase several hundred acres of cheap land where they could make a home and pasture their flocks.

Various men who owned large tracts of land thereabouts came to them and offered to deprive themselves of slices of the rocky hillside for a consideration.

Some of these men were slave-holders. They were very courteous and hospitable. They loaned their

horses and carriages to "Mr. Smith" and his sons so that they might go and see how the land lay. The Smiths spent a week in looking about, and finally instead of buying they decided to rent, for a year at least, to see how they liked it.

Five miles south of the village of Harper's Ferry they found a farm that suited them fairly well. They dickered over the rent, but finally came to an agreement with Dr. Kennedy, the owner, and paid him three months' rent in advance.

The neighbors watched them closely, for country neighbors are always inquisitive: they thought that there was not much furniture brought for so big a house. They also noted the absence of women and children. And furthermore, the sheep raisers had no sheep; leastwise they had not heard any bleat, and as for cows, there was not a horn to be seen. They had one old horse and a wagon, but no plows nor harrows, nor rollers. Some of the neighbors said that Old Man Smith—the one with the long white beard—had two sons and some said a dozen—for on a certain moonlight night full twelve men were seen to come out of the house and go off toward the mountains.

And the upshot of it was that Smith had found gold in the hills—they always knew it was there—he had sent off for experts and they were now prospecting. More men came and every morning they went off to the hills with picks and shovels.

They were a civil lot of men—those fellows that

lived at the Kennedy farm—"but unsociable, they never neighbored with nobody," said an old farmer to his wife. Among them were several Negroes and they were just as unsociable as the rest.

Ten miles back from Harper's Ferry, well over into Pennsylvania, Colonel Brydges had his camp of forty-seven picked men. All had been officers in the regular army; several were veterans of the Mexican war. All had been under fire, all were duelists in the best sense, and ready to give fight single handed; for be it known that there are men who will fight well in battle line but who cannot be tempted to pick their man and engage him to the death with a dirk. These men were fighters every one, and yet with intelligence and force enough to break a mob of raw recruits into files of eight, and make them do systematic work.

Brydges and his men knew this country well. Grand, wild, terrible, yet friendly it was. Ages and ages ago nature had tossed up great masses of earth-stuff and allowed it to drop as it would: massive ledges of rock jutted out in fantastic shapes, and disordered, distorted strata projected themselves this way and that. The valleys were narrow, the steeps abrupt, and the whole effect was that of a stone-strewn maze made to baffle and confuse. Over all grew a dense forest of hemlock, interspersed here and there with pine, oak, chestnut and maple. And these leafy curtains concealed the entrance to many a friendly cave that could only be entered like the sacred temples of Nynanza, on hands and knees.

Here Colonel Brydges and his force were to remain until Brown and his twenty Kansas rangers struck the first blow. Brown was to march into Harper's Ferry at two o'clock at night and quietly capture the arsenal, which was only guarded by a few men. He was then to take possession of the railroad depot, cut the wires and destroy the railroad bridge. He was also to capture at least forty white citizens as they appeared on the streets at daylight. Of course at first the town would be panic stricken, but by seven o'clock at least some of the citizens would recover their wits and get out their guns ready to fight.

At this time Colonel Brydges with his picked men would appear on the scene, marching in from two sides, having left their camp just three hours before. The distance had been walked by Brydges, so was properly timed. This fresh force would at once throw the place into a new panic, when all the prisoners that could be easily handled would be seized and both the Brown and Brydges force would drop back into the hills.

The quick move of two assaults, one right after the other, would terrorize and give the idea of numbers, and as Brydges would retreat northward into Pennsylvania and Brown southward into Virginia, it would require a double force to follow them.

The white prisoners would be exchanged man for man for able-bodied blacks, who would be at once armed with pikes and with rifles as soon as they

were taught how to handle them. All was ready.

But the summer was slipping past; fall had come and the big lot of ammunition that had been bought and paid for had not arrived. The factory in Hartford had had a fire—it took time to rebuild.

Brydges was getting nervous; Brown serious.

What was to be done? Brown must go on to the East and secure more ammunition at once.

He promised not to be gone more than a week.

VII

ONE of the principal citizens of Harper's Ferry was Colonel Washington. His residence was two miles out of the village on the road leading to the Kennedy farm.

Back of Colonel Washington's mansion, on the roadway that ran north and south, was a row of a half-dozen white-washed cottages—built right on the street. Behind these houses was a stretch of well tended garden where tall bean poles covered with vines that grew lush and lusty, lifted themselves clear above the flowering tobacco and the gaudy sunflowers.

These houses were occupied by colored people. Such cabins, made out of rough boards, plain battened and white-washed, are a universal feature of architecture throughout the South: and very dull is that person who cannot distinguish from the outside, the habitation of a Negro from that of a white man.

On his trips back and forth from town after mail or on errands Jim Slivers, body servant and own

familiar friend of John Brown, had noted that the second house from the end on this row of cabins had a sign above the door. And above this sign was a horseshoe. But colored people are given to hanging out signs, and they are also hopelessly given over to horseshoes and other talismanic schemes for keeping witches away, and bringing good luck.

Now there were two things that Jim Slivers prided himself upon: one that he was not a Negro and the other that he was not superstitious. Yet the honest fact was, he was both a Negro and also superstitious. For when a man begins to pride himself on the absence of a thing he usually has it, else, forsooth! he would be unconscious of it.

Each time that Jim passed by that row of cabins he looked at that horseshoe and read the sign. And once he had gone down by night just to see how the horseshoe would look in the pale light of the moon.

The sign was a queer one, and queerer than all else (for it was a "darky" sign), it was correctly spelled and properly punctuated:

JEDEDIAH the PROPHET:
DOCTOR
and
FORTUNE TELLER.

Besides the pride that Jim took in his absence of superstition, was a modest pride in his education.

This man who united the high offices of "Doctor" and "Fortune Teller" was evidently a learned individual, for could he not spell "prophet"? and prophet was a hard word. Indeed, few white folks could spell it right. Jim would have bet on that.

One day Jim got a glimpse of the Prophet, at least he thought it must be the Prophet. The great man was out back of his cabin, sitting astride of a bench with a draw-shave in hand, making ax helves. Jim was disappointed in his looks, for this man was small, and round shouldered and nearly white, whereas a sure-enough prophet should be large and very black, or else all white with a beard that reached his waist.

On going closer to the pickets and peeking through Jim saw that the Prophet was old; and that surely was in his favor. But as he turned his wrinkled face Jim was startled to see that, like himself, the man wore a close cropped beard, grizzly red and white, and his face was freckled. Jim trembled a little and pinched himself to see if he was awake; he felt someway that he was looking at a picture of himself as he would appear when he got old. As yet, of course he was only a youth, a wild, giddy, reckless youth, sowing a small crop of wild oats.

Their eyes met:

"Come in, sah, come in, it 's a fine day, sah," called the old man in the pleasant accent of the Southern Negro.

Jim opened the gate and walked in.

"Take a seat, sah! Sunflowah, a cheer for the gem-

men! Doan you stand thar starin' as if we was n't used to white folks!"

An old mulatto woman brought out a splint-bottomed chair, and dusting it with her apron placed it in the shade against the cabin.

"We 've saw you go by sah, sev'ral times, an' ha! ha! ha! ha! we laughed to see how much you looks like my ole man thar ust to look fore he got the rumatize, ha! ha! ha!"

"Go 'bout you work, woman," ordered the Prophet in a voice of wrath.

The Prophet's wrath was feigned, but Jim was mad in earnest.

"I 'm no nigger!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, yes you be, sah! but you no better dan white folks on dat 'count. I 'm no niggah either, I 'm white. I am!" chuckled the old man.

"So you are white an' I 'm a Nigger, is that it?"

"Yes, dat 's a fact!" and the old man laughed again.

"I 'd thrash you, old fool, if you was younger!"

"Go 'way chile—go 'way—how ol' you think I am?"

The easy way the old man was taking things sidetracked Jim's wrath by piquing his curiosity. He dropped into the chair, leaned back, and thinking to humor the old man answered:

"Oh, eighty!"

"Go way—I 'm not seventy-five, and you 're near sixty."

Jim felt that he was in the presence of a man just

a little smarter than himself. The guess at his age was so near the truth that it stung, especially in view of the fact that Jim had insisted for years that he was forty-two and no more.

"Oho, so you 're a prophet are you?"

"Yes, I 'm a prophet. You folks down dare be on no good errand!"

"Who do you mean, you old rascal?"

"You, at dat Kennedy farm!"

"Why?"

"First comes John Smith an' his sons, then more sons, an' then more. Now fully twenty sons!"

"We 're hunting for gold in the mountains."

"Is you though!"

"Yes, you 're a prophet, will we find it?"

"Less see your han', man."

Jim reached his hand forward and the prophet studied it carefully, mumbling to himself.

"No, you won't find no gold—you might if I 'd consult de Spirits for you an' show where it am. Bring you Massa' down, an' for five dollars—good money—I 'll work the spell!"

"Who shall I bring did you say?"

"De man what owns you."

"Fool, no man owns me, but I 'll bring Mr. Smith to see you."

"All right—an' so you is free, is you?"

"Yes."

"An' dem other niggers at your house—is dey free?"

"Of course, Mr. Smith does not believe in slav-'ry—it 's wrong."

"Lordy, I wish you 'd convince my Massa' ob dat fack, I do!"

"Well, pos'bly we will."

Jim could fight on a square deal, where his enemy stood out in open: in short he was not afraid of anything that could be seen, but the Unknown made him tremble. This old prophet was a Voudou doctor, and Jim felt a little in awe of him; he had a wholesome respect for the Powers of the Air with which this prophet was in league. These Powers had brought people good luck and they had brought them bad luck. He knew this—he had known of men to fall down in a fit through charms worked over them by a Voudou.

If an enemy was after you the Voudou could confound him; was your wife estranged, the Voudou could bring her back; was luck against you, the Voudou could reverse the spell and bring fortune your way.

But John Brown had no faith in Voudouism. He scoffed it; he prayed only to one God and had no faith in the special influence of any one man or woman, all men were equal before the Almighty. And as to all this, Jim was sure that John Brown was wrong; but alas! Brown could not be reasoned with.

And more 's the pity, for by the help of the Powers that ammunition would have gotten through on time. Now there was a rasping delay—the men were getting restless. And worse, the slave-holders might have

their suspicions aroused and prepare for defense.

Jim took a big chew of tobacco and went trudging off home, with the inward avowal that he would have nothing to do with the miserable Voudou Doctor. The man might be a rascal and work a spell that would bring ruin on them all: such men were dangerous.

But after walking a couple of miles further it came over him that a man who was himself a slave would surely be very glad to have all the slaves free. Now if this Prophet had power to do certain wonderful things, would he not be glad to use this power in helping bring about his own freedom?

It must be so, and Jim wished that some one would have kicked him for being so stupid as not to have seen this point before.

This Voudou Prophet would work a Spell that would bring good luck to their project. Every force possible must be brought to bear to bring about the desired result; had Brown not said it again and again?

Jim ground his teeth in impatient rage to think that Brown was not here so he could ask his permission to make a confidante of the Prophet and thus secure his help. Brown had been gone three days. In a week he would be back.

But a week passed and he had not returned.

Jim called on the Prophet and studied him quietly and carefully, giving nothing away in words or manner. The Voudou seemed like a man of ability.

Could he work a Spell that would bring success to

a plan? Yes, he surely could, but he must know what the desired plan was.

Jim hesitated—he demanded a test before divulging a single detail.

The Prophet suddenly swung his hands up, clapped them together; his form stiffened, his eyes closed, he fell back in his chair as if dying. Suddenly he began to struggle, his words came as if from the grave.

"I see—I see the inside of that Kennedy house—it is filled with armed men—they have guns, and knives fastened on poles like spears—their leader's name is not Smith—I must have his true name before I can go on—"

"Brown," answered Jim; he would tell this much and no more.

The Prophet's eyes opened with a jerk, his senses were coming back—but suddenly his head began to shake and he passed out again under the "Influence."

"Brown—his name is Brown, born in Connecticut, moved to Ohio, then to Kansas, where he fought for Abolitionism and had to run away—and—and—"

The man's head began to jerk, he sat up, his eyes opened; and he declared that he did not know a single word of what he had said.

"Has the 'fluence give you anything, sah?" he asked innocently.

Jim had noticed that while under the "Influence" the man talked with the force and accent of an educated man of the North, and when he was "himself," he was simply an ignorant mulatto.

The test was astounding. Jim was convinced.

He moved his chair up close to the Prophet and in a hurried whisper told him all, and begged for his co-operation. The Prophet gave a low whistle of wonderment.

"You gwine to 'tack de arsenal—to capture de armory at de Ferry?"

"Yes."

"An' when?"

"As soon as Brown gits back an' the 'munition comes."

"Judas Priest!!"

"Yes, will you work a Spell to give us luck?"

"In course I will, is n't I a slave?—Come to me the night before you begins, an' I 'll work the Charm!"

"An' why not now?"

"Can't! must do it just before you start."

"You are sure you can give us luck?"

"In course I can."

"Well, work a Spell so Brown will get the 'munition and get back quick!"

"I 'll do it!"

"When?"

"To-night at midnight."

Jim handed him a dollar—all the money he had, and shook his hand in gratitude. The Prophet gave him a piece of snake-skin in which was wrapped three black beans. This snake-skin was tied at each end with the dried intestines of a bat. The charm was to be worn by Jim over his heart—pinned to his shirt.

Just before the blow was struck the charm was to be brought back, when the Prophet would bless it and this would make victory certain.

The next evening John Brown came. Three days later the ammunition arrived.

There was virtue in the charm.

VIII

LL was now ready. Only one thing deterred: that was that the Negroes in Canada, to the extent of a thousand or more, had not received the supplies that Brown had shipped them. They did not want the blow to be struck until they were ready to march. The very day, aye! the very hour that the wires brought the words, they would cross into the United States and move southward like an avalanche, gaining in force as they swept forward, but they must have provisions. By October 27th they would be in perfect condition to move.

Brown wrote them that the blow would be struck on the night of the 26th inst.

It was now Sunday evening—the night of the 26th was still ten days away. It was ten o'clock and the men were all asleep on their straw beds in the upper rooms. The lights were out.

Old John Brown sat alone in the darkness, musing — he seldom went to bed until midnight

—his system seemed to require but little sleep.

He arose, put on his hat, took a stout stick that stood in the corner and moved softly out into the night. He wished to go alone into the woods and pray, as was his wont.

The rising October wind ran hissing through the swaying pine tops; it rose and fell, and died away, and then came back with renewed force and fury.

Dark clouds with great outstretched wings like gigantic bats chased each other across the sky. Only now and again for an instant could the moon be seen.

The wind increased, the clouds thickened and a few dashing rain drops fell. Brown had walked a quarter of a mile down the road and now withdrew under the protecting boughs of a great low pine that stood by the roadside.

Muffled voices in low conversation could be heard coming up the road. Sheet-lightning shone out and revealed three men; one short and stooped; this one shuffled and limped in his walk as if old and infirm.

"Dar 's no haste—dey is n't gwine to begin de fracas till a week yet, anyway!"

"But are you sure?"

"Dead sartain! Dar 's only twenty men, all packed away like rats in a hole—jest bring up de Charlestown militia and bag de whole bizness some night, dat 's de way."

The three men passed on. Brown followed, but he was too far behind to catch their words, although as the lightning gleamed he saw that they were gesticu-

lating and conversing earnestly. They ceased talking and cautiously approached the house. They moved slowly up to the windows and tried to peer in.

"Ah, good evening, gentlemen!" came the firm, clear voice of Old John Brown suddenly behind them.

The three men turned with a jump: they would have run but Brown said, "I'm glad to see you—neighbors, I s'pose?"

"Yes sir, we was just goin' by and thought we 'd make you a friendly visit."

"I 'll call my son to bring a light"—

"Oh, don't trouble, we 'll come over to-morrow"—

"No, but I wish to talk with you now."

Brown opened the door and called—"Oliver, we have callers, bring a light!" He then moved around so as to stand between the visitors and the road.

It was only a moment before Oliver came down the stairs, half dressed, carrying a lighted candle.

"Walk in gentlemen, walk in!"

"Oh, we 'd rather not to-night—some other time!"

"Walk in, I say, I 've something important to tell you."

The two men stepped inside the door.

"And that other man—the little man, where is he?"

"Why, there were only two of us!"

"You should not tell a falsehood, sir—Watson, take four of the boys and bring in that third visitor that is skulking outside—be quick or he 'll get away!"

"You 're not goin' to kill us, neighbor, are you?" whined one of the men.

"No, you shall not be harmed in the least. You are my prisoners, though!"

The men from up-stairs were all astir. They tumbled down the stairway, guns in hand, putting on clothing and buckling on belts as they came.

Brown turned to his men:

"Boys! the hour has arrived! To-night we strike the blow—two prisoners are already ours!"

An involuntary cheer broke from the lips of the men who had been penned up for so many monotonous, weary days. Joy! the hour had come! Fight—fight, and victory was theirs!

Brown with a wave of his hand commanded silence.

"Jim Slivers, handcuff these two gentlemen together! I 'm sorry, but we will have to do it for safety. To-morrow you shall be exchanged for Negroes, and go free."

"Is they 'quainted?" said Jim with a grin and a leer as he came forward and snapped a steel cuff around the wrist of each trembling man.

"Jim Slivers, I think you have had more experience in night work than any man here"—

"I 've cat's eyes an' can see in the dark."

"Can you go to Camp Brydges in two hours?"

"Yes, or less!"

"You have walked it by night?"

"Four times—when the sky was blacker than black!"

"Jim Slivers, it is now half past ten. If you reach Camp Brydges in three hours it will do. Go to Col.

Brydges and tell him that we are discovered and must strike the blow to-night. My force will march in an hour—his must move not later than four to reinforce us, all exactly as arranged!"

"All as 'greed, 'cept he must move to-night—is that it?"

"You understand it, this night we strike the blow!"

"Good-bye, boys, I 'll meet you all at the Arsenal for breckfuss—good-bye—I 'm off!"

A half-smothered cheer followed Jim as he disappeared through the door and the darkness swallowed him.

"We can't find that man; Father, are you sure there was another?" said Watson, entering the room.

"Yes, there were three. Prisoner, who was that other man with you?"

"A nigger, sir!"

"You mean a colored man!"

"Yes, sir."

"I thought so—and was he a slave?"

"Yes, sir."

"And how comes it that he knew our plans to free the slaves?"

"One of your men told him."

"What! but never mind, it 's too late now. And how came it that this slave should confide in you?—speak up!"

"We forced him—we saw your man talking to him, then we went to him and made him tell us!"

"Now you see my men about you here—which one of these men revealed our secret?"

"None of these here—it was the one you just sent away!"

"And he gave our plans to a slave?"

"Yes."

"And who else knows these plans save you two?"

"No one but the nigger who told us!"

"Well—well—you seem to speak the truth; and if no one but a slave knows it, we are all right yet. The slave will side with us, that 's sure, when not intimidated by such as you. Never mind hunting for him, Watson, he got panic-stricken and crawled off in the grass. Boys, get ready for the fight!"

IX

TWO men were ordered to go with a lantern and hitch the horse to the wagon. The single solitary old steed was led blinking and winking out into the darkness. Was ever before mortal horse bound on such momentous errand!

Haversacks, axes, a sledge and a crowbar were piled into the wagon. The men had buckled on their cartridge belts, each containing forty rounds of ammunition. Each man carried a Sharpe's rifle, two pistols and a knife.

"We are ready to start!" said John Brown. "You will all kneel while I ask the blessing of God on our undertaking. And will the two gentlemen who are providentially with us also kneel?"

All knelt, and John Brown offered a prayer of thanksgiving for the guidance that had thus far been given them: he asked that the Spirit of Almighty God would still be with them.

A man was detailed to remain and guard the house

and the two prisoners. At seven o'clock this guard was to make for the hills to meet the main force at a point indicated.

The old man climbed up into the wagon and drove slowly off down through the darkness toward the sleeping village.

The men dropped in behind, following silently two by two—not a word was spoken.

If they met persons on the way it was the intent to capture them and send them back to the house, holding them prisoners. But the road was deserted—not a team nor man was to be seen.

Arriving at the village two men were instructed to go ahead and pass down the two principal streets and extinguish the street lamps; two others were sent to destroy the telegraph line.

As they approached, the river watchman that patroled the bridge appeared. At the muzzle of a rifle he was arrested. Three men were left to guard the bridge.

The rest of the company with the prisoner went with Brown at their head straight to the Arsenal. Around this long, brick building was a high iron fence. The gate was tried: it was locked. A sharp wrench with the crowbar and the lock was broken. They passed in and quietly seized the two watchmen who were asleep.

By this time the two men who had extinguished the street lamps arrived with the three policemen—the entire police force of the place—as prisoners.

Soon the men who had gone to cut the telegraph wires appeared with the station agent as a prisoner.

Ten of the men were now sent out by two's to bring in certain prominent citizens, whose houses had been previously located.

By four o'clock they had returned, marching in front of them, in all, fourteen prisoners. There was no disorder—no confusion—not a shot had been fired on either side.

A passenger train had came in on the Maryland side at two o'clock. The switch had been turned and spiked. The men at the bridge ordered the passengers and trainmen to remain inside the cars on pain of death. Thinking that a large armed force had captured the town they were willing enough to obey orders, and lay quiet until daylight.

Day dawned and Old Man Brown went across the bridge and had an interview with the Conductor.

"I am here to free the slaves. The Abolitionists of the land have at last arisen, and in the name of God we declare all men free!" said Brown.

"And—and may we go on with this train?" asked the Conductor.

"Yes, go! and carry the news to the City of Washington and to the world that the blow which will make all slaves in America free has been struck: go!"

The switch was quickly repaired. Brown walked across the bridge with the Conductor to assure him that all was safe.

The train started, it moved faster, then faster, it

was soon going with lightning speed for Washington, fifty-seven miles away.

Brown watched it disappear up the valley and grimly smiled.

Men began to appear on the streets—they were captured and marched inside the iron gates.

It was six o'clock and the town was terror-stricken. People dare not look out of their houses; dreadful rumors were about; the North had marched upon them, a force consisting of thousands of armed men. What would be the awful result? Who could say!

Soon there was firing in the streets. Some of the citizens had gotten out shot-guns and rifles and were shooting at the Arsenal from long range.

Their shots were answered. Other shots were heard. It was Colonel Brydges with his first detachment.

"Get ready for the retreat! March all prisoners ahead! Should any try to escape, shoot!!" shouted John Brown.

To the huddled, trembling prisoners he made a speech assuring them that none should be harmed provided they did not resist or try to escape: they would all be exchanged within a few days for black men: there would be no insult nor ill treatment.

Off to the northeast could be seen a cloud of dust. Brown climbed to an upper window and scrutinized it carefully: it was the second detachment of Colonel Brydges' force. In an hour they would be safely in the hills—leaving Virginia to recover from her fright as best she could, only to be terrified again.

The firing in the streets increased. Bullets began to break the windows.

It was seven by the town clock and Brydges had not come.

Brown climbed again to the window and looked out for the cloud of dust. It was still there—but he was mistaken—it was not dust, it was only fog rising from the river.

A bullet struck and splintered the sash a foot from his face. He looked out across the street and saw a man firing from the windows of a warehouse. Suddenly the man who had shot at him stiffened, lunged and plunged through the window headlong to the stone sidewalk, pierced through the heart. One of Brown's men had located him.

They were all ready to march. Would Brydges never come?

The crowd in the street increased. Men armed with every conceivable weapon were coming in from the country. They made a circle clear around the Arsenal, cutting off the two men who guarded the bridge. These two brave men had been pressed upon until their ammunition was gone—every moment they expected the force in the Arsenal would come marching out, or that Colonel Brydges would appear.

The force inside the iron gates did not come forth, and Colonel Brydges did not appear.

What was to be done!

Owen struck off alone on the Maryland side to meet Colonel Brydges. Watson and his comrade

made a bold rush to reach the Arsenal. Watson fell mortally wounded; his companion, William Thompson, was captured, clutched and dragged by ravenous hands that sought to tear him limb from limb.

This gave the crowd courage and they surged closer. The firing increased.

Oh! if only Brydges with his brave band should appear how that mob would melt away. They would scatter like grasshoppers.

Brown could have charged the crowd and gotten away. But Watson was dead—he saw him fall—and Thompson a prisoner! To retreat now meant leaving the prisoners behind. It would be too cumbersome to try to move them. Indeed it would be an impossible feat!

And to leave the prisoners behind meant failure—or at least partial failure. But Brydges would come soon—then the work could be made complete, all as planned—save for poor Watson—alas! who would break the news to his wife?

But Brydges did not appear.

The flies came in swarms and covered the face of Watson where he lay all stark and bleeding out on the stony street.

To better protect his men, Brown withdrew into the engine house, taking his prisoners with him. The doors were barricaded.

If a truce could be obtained for just an hour, the reinforcements would arrive! Brown sent Henry Thompson, his son-in-law, out with a white flag. Be-

fore Thompson had advanced ten feet he fell, pierced with a dozen bullets.

All that forenoon the crowd was kept at bay. The Militia Company from Charlestown—a hundred strong—dressed in shining uniform, and well equipped, arrived. But they could do nothing—to charge meant death, to some at least.

A bullet struck Oliver as he stood at a port hole. He began to vomit blood and tried to speak—to give a message that should be sent to his young wife. He sank to the ground, and his old father, with rifle in one hand felt the dying boy's pulse with the other.

Then he turned, took deliberate aim out through the port hole, fired and turning again closed the young man's eyes, for the boy was dead.

That evening a detatchment of United States Marines arrived from Washington in charge of Col. Robert E. Lee. Lee demanded an unconditional surrender.

It was refused.

All that night the little force held out firm. Perhaps Brydges had waited for night before coming to their rescue. Only six men were left, and two of these badly wounded.

At daylight the Marines charged the place—battered in the doors and rushed in, swords in hand.

Old Man Brown fell, slashed and thrust through with swords and bayonets—his face a mangled mass of blood—unrecognizable.

The plan had failed.

X

BUT the old man still breathed. The mob gathered about and sought to finish him, but a strong voice from some one in the crowd went up, "Leave him alone, boys, don't you see he is dying, anyway?" And the same unknown man placed an old coat under the grey head for a pillow, seeking to stop the gaping wounds, and standing by, he protected the helpless form from those who would have trampled upon it.

"And what brought you here?" bawled a bystander, when it was seen that he was not dead.

"Duty sir," came the answer.

"And do you think it was your duty to invade this place with an armed force, and make war on your country?"

"They tell me I am dying, sir, I cannot argue with you; I tried to free the slaves and am sorry I did not succeed. I did my duty as I saw it."

Life still lingered in that iron frame, and in a blanket the old man was carried to prison.

Governor Wise arrived the next day, and when the aristocratic Virginian met Old Brown of Osawatomie, he recognized at once that he was in the presence of one greater than himself. Governor Wise, who it seems had the elements of nobility in his make-up to a rare degree, has given us an account of that interview:

"He is no mad man, but the best bundle of nerves I ever saw; cut, bruised and battered, and chained beside, he showed himself to be a man of courage and fortitude. He is a fanatic, of course, beyond all reason, but he thinks himself a Christian and believes honestly he is called of God to free the Negroes. They say when one son was dead by his side, he held his rifle in one hand, and felt the pulse of another who was dying, all the time cautioning his men to be cool and sell their lives dearly.

"While I was talking with him," continued Governor Wise, "some one called out that he was a robber and a murderer. Brown replied, 'You slave-holders are the robbers.' I said to him, 'Captain Brown, your hair is matted with blood, and you are speaking hard words. Perhaps you forget I am a slave-holder; you had better be thinking on eternity. Your wounds may be fatal, and if they are not, you will have to stand trial for treason, conspiracy and murder, and how can you hope to escape, when you admit your guilt?'

"The old man leaned on his elbow and beneath the bandages on his broken face I saw the blue eyes

flash, and he answered me: 'Governor Wise, you call me old, but after all I have only ten or fifteen years at most the start of you in that journey to eternity, of which you speak; I will leave this world first, but you must follow; I will meet you across Death's border; and I tell you, Governor Wise, prepare for eternity. You admit you are a slave-holder. You have a responsibility weightier than mine. Prepare to meet your God!'"

Forty-one days passed. The physician reported to the authorities that the prisoner's wounds had partially healed.

John Brown wrote to Margaret Brydges: "I am happy, happier than ever before in my life; I die tomorrow and my only regret is that in this life I cannot repay you even in part for all you have done for me. Farewell!"

The morrow came with cloudless sky—a splendid southern winter day. The blue hills stretched off in every direction, with woods upon woods, and lazily ran the great placid river between.

The prisoner still heavily chained was helped into a wagon. Surrounded by an armed force of over two thousand men, with cavalry and loaded cannon, the line of march was taken up for the place of execution two miles away.

The old man refused aid in getting out of the wagon, and walking up to the gallows steps, the strength of his youth seemed to have returned. He looked up at the sky, to the sun in the heavens, at the rolling

river and the miles upon miles of woods. His lips moved for a moment in prayer; and then he said to the guards, "I am ready."

XI

AND why did not Colonel Brydges move to the rescue of his friend?— what grinning demon of fate interposed and shifted the pawns so that Brown and his brave men marched straight to death?

The answer is easy: Brydges did not march on that eventful night simply because no message reached him that he was needed. It was two days before Owen found him in his safe retreat, and alas! Brown was then surrounded by shotted cannon and an armed force that made rescue impossible. Courage had gone from the hearts of Colonel Brydges' men when they heard of the disaster that had overtaken Brown. They scattered at once, each intent on personal safety.

Ere this the discerning reader has guessed that the Prophet was none other than our old friend, the Rev. Jedediah Judson. In his being at Harper's Ferry at this time there is nothing very peculiar nor extraordinary. We bid good-bye to our friend in San

Francisco, and lo! we meet him face to face on the Strand in London three months later. People we know and people who know people who know us are at every turn. The planet called Earth is small. All is possible here: it is the unexpected that happens.

Several hundred pages back we saw the Rev. Jedediah Judson arrested and lifted without ceremony into a wagon, where he was chained to six runaway slaves. We heard the gruff order given to move; we heard the crack of the driver's whip; we heard the rattle of the wagon as the cavalcade moved away, and as it disappeared over the top of the hill we heard the armed guard on horseback shout back a yell of defiance.

Where did they take the Rev. Jedediah Judson, and what did they do with him?

The six runaway slaves had been the property of Colonel Silverton, and we remember that this man was in financial distress. When the burden of debt was so piled up that the Colonel was bowed beneath the weight, he called his slaves together and explained the situation. They wept and he wept, but they must be sold, it was the only thing possible, in fact they had already been attached by the sheriff according to due legal process, and were now practically under guard. The next day they stood on the auction block and were all bought by one man. This of itself would have been a very favorable circumstance, but Captain Harker, who bought them, was a Louisiana planter and the rice fields of Louisiana meant death.

Sorrowfully they went back to their old home at Colonel Silverton's to spend their last night: on the morrow the march for the dreaded rice fields would begin. They did not go to bed, but sat up weeping and praying, and singing the songs of Zion. But the chance of escape came, and we know how they followed the North Star: we know, too, how they were re-captured at Hudson and how all save Jim Slivers were taken back, and how instead of Jim they took Jedediah Judson.

Jedediah was older than Jim, but they were about the same size; both had red hair, and blue eyes, and snub noses. The slave hunters never for a moment doubted but that their captives were all "Sliverses." They secured the number called for and were content.

A pistol was stuck in Jedediah's face and he was told that if he made any uproar or if he tried to escape he would be shot. And doubtless he would have been, and knowing this he wisely held his peace and inwardly prayed for deliverance.

The cavalcade traveled fast and furious. They exchanged horses from time to time; in a few days they came to the Ohio River. There they took a flat-boat that was in waiting and floated down the stream. The captives were kept in the hold, except for an hour a day when they were allowed to come up two at a time and pace the deck for exercise.

But Jedediah's prayers were not answered: he was in a desperate condition. He could not escape, he

could not even commit suicide, he was slowly drifting to the rice fields.

Other slaves were taken on board the boat from time to time; and when Jedediah told them that he was a white man they only laughed, all save one—a young mulatto woman.

One day when he was allowed to come up and pace the deck for an hour chained to a black man, he was closely scrutinized by Captain Harker. When the hour had expired the Captain slipped the handcuff that fastened him to his dusky mate and called him to one side.

"You see this pistol?" said the slave-owner, drawing the weapon from his hip pocket.

"Yes," replied the other, blanching.

"Well, I can blow your brains out with this gun and then throw your carcass in the river and no man dare say scat—do you hear?"

Jedediah's teeth chattered, but he managed to say that he heard.

"And I 'll do it if you try to get away, otherwise not—do you know why?"

"No!"

"Well it 's just because you cost me seven hundred dollars, good money. If you behave you 're safe, if not —look out!"

Jedediah started to explain that he had not been bought at all, but stolen. A look from the other silenced him.

"Can you read?" asked the Captain.

"Yes."

"Then just read this 'ere bill of sale—seven Sliverses, I bought: Joe, Sally, Molly, Squint, Sandy, Jerry and Jim. You are Jim, don't deny it. The sheriff sold you and I bought you. Now I can keep you, sell you or kill you—if you do what I want I 'll keep you. You said you could read?"

"Yes."

"And write?"

"Yes."

"And cipher!"

"Yes."

"And weigh cotton?"

"I suppose so."

"Now look here, Jim Slivers, I heard you praying down there among them niggers and I 've changed your name to Parson Slivers, and if you 'll write my letters and figger for me—I never was much on figgers—I 'll put you in charge of my cotton scales and let you act as overseer. Do you hear?"

"Yes."

"Now, Parson Slivers, you saw that yaller gal I bought at Memphis?"

Jedediah admitted that he had seen the girl.

"Well, Parson, if you 'll behave and promise to do your best for me I 'll give you that gal for your wife."

"But I 'm married"—

"Oh, no, Parson, if you was married I 'd own your wife. When I bought you that done away with all marriage bonds—see?"

Jedediah did not exactly see, but he preferred not to argue the case.

"Now we 'll go down in the hold and talk with the gal," continued the Captain.

The hatch was raised, and master and man climbed down the ladder. A swinging lantern gave out feeble, fluttering gleams on the black forms lying on the floor or crouching in the corners.

"Sunflower Jones, come forward!" called Captain Harker in a voice of command.

The girl came slowly forward.

"This is Parson Slivers, Sunflower, I bought him for an overseer and to keep my accounts, and I bought you for a house servant—now I think that you are about right for each other, don't you?"

The girl simpered, hung her head and began chewing on the twisted corner of her apron.

"When they does that, it 's a go! I never urge a wench in these matters—I leave it all to Nature—I 'm square, I am!"

Jedediah shook hands with the girl and Captain Harker handcuffed them wrist to wrist, declaring them man and wife. Then they were given the freedom of the upper deck for the rest of the day.

Sunflower was three-fourths white. Her hair was coal black and wavy, not kinky; her face was oval, her eyes lustrous. The position that she had occupied among the other slaves was an uncomfortable one, and in giving her to this man, Harker knew that her mind was set at rest from the danger of a worse fate.

For a lone woman is always fearful, and this one had been on the borders of hysteria.

"The Parson" was the most intelligent among the captives, and Sunflower was rather elated than otherwise on having secured him for a husband. Captain Harker was a diplomat: he pleased both the man and woman, and being pleased they were much less likely to attempt to escape. Besides that, contentment is hygienic: this man and woman were valuable property.

As for Jedediah he could not help comparing his new-found mate with 'Liza Ann—the one left behind. Sunflower was a jewel beside her: Sunflower did her best to please her new lord, while 'Liza Ann had ever done her best to worry him. Sunflower was a shrewd womanly woman who knew how to hold her mate by all those subtle intuitive and gentle arts that are the heritage of femininity. The Parson thought that he managed Sunflower; in reality her soft ways ruled him. He taught her to sing "hymn tunes," and she taught him plantation melodies: and so they sat on deck and sang softly hour after hour.

Harker allowed them to "hold services" down in the hold, and although there was little to give thanks to God for, yet these simple souls turned naturally to the comforts of religion. So powerful was Jedediah's preaching, and so potent was Sunflower's song that the entire congregation accepted salvation before the boat reached Vicksburg.

From New Orleans a two days' journey on foot

brought them to the Harker plantation. Here the Parson and Sunflower were given a little white-washed cabin just back of the mansion. There was plenty of hard work laid out for each, but so long as they were willing and did their best to please their owner they were given good treatment. On Sundays Jedediah preached to the slaves, who came from miles around to hear his eloquence. He soon found out the sort of preaching they desired, and he gave it to them in full measure. He dropped his Yankee twang, taking on the mellow mouthing of the consonants. The law of Adaptation to Environment took him an easy prey; for weak and sensual natures quickly revert to type.

Jedediah often thought of the old acquaintances in the North with a fond wish that he might see them again. But when he remembered the rebuffs of Ruth; the worry of 'Liza Ann; the quiet scorn of John Brown; the debts and the trying endeavors to make the two ends meet, he sought the smiling face of Sunflower, and the little Sunflowers and "red-heads" that came with the years, and was content. Then the moist, heavy air of the semi-tropics tends toward letting well-enough alone. Besides all that, Ohio was a thousand miles away, and Jedediah put the snuffers on all spasmodic sparks of conscience by saying—and it was true—"I cannot escape alive, even if I wanted to."

But Captain Harker was mortal and he died and was buried. His estate was broken up and his "live

stock" sold at auction by order of the executor. Fortunately Jedediah and Sunflower were bid in by one purchaser. They fell into good hands and Colonel Washington of Virginia was well pleased with his new purchase—both the man and woman being in intelligence much above the average Negro.

When Jedediah went North with his new master, he took with him a goodly mixture of Voudouism. Mixed with his theology it did good service in drawing to him the reverence and spare pennies of his colored neighbors. He also had some skill as an "herb doctor," which was rather pleasing to Col. Washington, for that worthy gentleman had small faith in the "Old School," and it probably was a fact that Jedediah's potions and incantations were fully as curative in their properties as the pills and powders of the aristocratic white practitioners.

Jedediah acted as butler and general overseer for Col. Washington after he moved to Harper's Ferry. But as time went by he became rheumatic, and even the most solemn incantations failed to remove the difficulty or bring back his youth. But Col. Washington was a kind man and he allowed his old servant to go out of active commission and live in partial retirement —putting in his time at carpentry or gardening and general "pottering"—and all the time he practiced his odd mixture of magic and paganism.

We have seen how Jim Slivers was attracted to the old man. We have also seen how Jim left the Kennedy farm on that memorable night when he started to

carry the message to Colonel Brydges. He had to pass by the cabin where the Prophet dwelt; to his surprise he saw the glimmer of a light within. He had no intention of stopping, in fact the exultation of the approaching fight completely filled his mind.

But as he swung past the cabin the light caught his eye—he had gotten full twenty yards beyond when the thought came to him that the Prophet might be up; if so it would only take him a moment to bless the charm that was so securely pinned over his heart.

He stopped, turned back and approaching the door, tapped gently. The door was opened by the great man in person. He looked a trifle agitated—as if he had been running, but there was no time for idle talk.

"We strike the blow to-night," exclaimed Jim in a whisper.

"To-night?"

"Yes, I 'm going now to notify Brydges!"

"And who is Brydge?"

"Why, don't you know—he 's up in the mountains with a hundred men. Here, bless the charm quick—to-morrow all the niggers are free as sure as your father was a white man!"

"But you did not tell me of this man Brydge before!"

"Of course not—why should I? You see Brown goes in and takes the town, then Brydges and me swoops down at daylight an' helps bag the pris'ners."

"Oh, I see!"

"Yes, here is the charm—bless it quick." Jim had

set his rifle in the corner and taken the charm out of his bosom.

The Prophet took the piece of dried snake skin:

"I must be alone—step out of the door a moment, and I 'll work the spell that will bring you all sure success!"

Jim stepped outside; the door closed softly on its wooden hinges.

The Prophet took the gun from the corner, drew back the hammer, opened the little sliding window, and resting the muzzle of the rifle out through, called:

"Neighbor—look here!"

Jim Slivers turned his head—there was a loud report—the powder burned his face, and the heavy cartridge carried away the top of his skull.

* * * * * * *

Sumter had been fired on and President Lincoln's call had come for troops. He asked for seventy-five thousand—three times that number responded.

Only eighteen months had passed since the raid on Harper's Ferry.

It was the month of May, and uniformed men were moving down Market Street in the city of Cincinnati.

With flying flags and waving banners; with shrill shriek of fife and roll of drums, they moved gaily southward with steady tread. The line of march was richly festooned with the red, white and blue; and grace and beauty filled the windows, waving farewell to the light-hearted boys whose bayonets glistened in the rays of the morning sun.

Col. Brydges' regiment was passing. And as these uniformed men marched they sang: loud, deep, clear and strong came the notes from a thousand lusty throats.

Two white-haired women sat—hand close pressed in hand—high up in the window overlooking the street where the men marched and marching sang.

"Did you catch the words?" said one of the women to the other.

"No, but listen—the surge of the chorus comes back again—listen!"

"John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring in the grave,
But his soul goes marching on."

SO HERE ENDETH TIME AND CHANCE AS
WRITTEN BY ELBERT HUBBARD AND PRINT-
ED BY THE ROYCROFTERS AT THE ROY-
CROFT SHOP, WHICH IS IN EAST AU-
RORA, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK,
U. S. A., & COMPLETED THIS
FIRST DAY OF AUGUST,
ANNO CHRISTI
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